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MORDAUNT HALL;

OR,

A SEPTEMBER NIGHT.

A NOVEL

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," "EMILIA WYNDHAM,"

"ANGELA," &c.

"The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars; nor basely hovers
Below—but meditates th' immortal way
Home to the source of light, and intellectual day."

CRASHAW.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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MORDAUNT HALL.

CHAPTER I.

“The chamber where the good man meets his death
Is privileged”

YOUNG.

I WAS about to tell you of the first evil influence which his peculiar position shed upon the infant Gideon's life—his severance from his wet nurse and foster-mother.

Now you are ready to say that such a severance must have been inevitable, and was invariably the case when the children of the wealthy were fostered in cottages, and that, therefore,

this evil, at least, cannot be charged upon the sin of his father.

But I think the cases will not bear a parallel. Though unquestionably this habit of fostering, and the consequent painful disruption at that early age, of a child's strongest affections, must have produced both misery and evil, yet there was the mother at home, waiting to receive the child with that sort of sympathetic tenderness which unites the mother with her infant in bonds so mysterious and so strong; and there was, in all probability, a family of brothers and sisters to welcome the little stranger into their bosom. I have heard a description of this return home to a father's wealthy house by one nursed for two years in a cottage, and of the elder sisters carrying the poor, little, heart-broken child about, and trying everything in their power to divert and comfort it.

The natural affections thus excited soon heal the wound that has been inflicted; but how different was the case for this poor little boy!

He was between two and three years old, when

one morning Mrs. Mordaunt entered Calantha's room before she had risen, saying,—

“My dear child, don't hurry yourself; but the result of the frightful accident which happened to poor Penny the other day is no longer doubtful. I wished to tell you of it myself.”

Poor Penny had fallen, about a week before this, from, or rather with, his high garden ladder, and had broken his thigh in a terrible manner.

Calantha raised herself from her pillow with some difficulty, saying,—

“Dear mamma! you don't say so! Poor, poor fellow!”

“The surgeon has just left me; he thinks very badly of the case. The poor man is in a very alarming state, they have never been able to reduce the fever: in short, Mr. Barnet seems to think the poor man will die.”

“God forbid!” cried Calantha; “what *is* to become of all those little ones! But I trust he may recover yet.”

“We must do what we can for them all; but

the poor man will not recover—mortification has taken place.”

“ May I go and see him, mamma? I must get up—I must go and see him. His poor wife, too! We are become quite friends. Will you ring, mamma, for me, if you please? I must go and see him.”

Her maid was summoned, and she was soon dressed, was in her garden chair, and on her way to the house of sorrow.

He had been an excellent, faithful servant; a hard-working, honest man; a kind husband, and a good father. He had feared God himself, and had reared his children to love and fear Him; and here he lay, cut off in the prime of life by a cruel accident, arising from a trifling act of carelessness in not placing his ladder properly; and his wife and children stood round his bed bewailing him with the bitterest sorrow.

His poor wife, her apron over her head, stood wringing her hands and sobbing, as if her heart would break. His elder children cried and bewailed themselves; his youngest, the foster-

brother of Gideon, the father's peculiar pet and darling, was upon the bed, in his father's arms, and was kissing with childish affection the damp, darkening forehead of the dying man.

At the foot of the bed, in the midst of all this sorrow, unnoticed for the first time, Gideon stood, left out, as it were, and alone, perfectly grave and still, his large, earnest eyes passing slowly from one to another, as if at a loss to comprehend what it was that was going on; and yet which, it was evident, impressed him deeply.

The door opening as Calantha entered, seemed to arouse the child a little; he turned his little head, and shifted from the bottom of the bed; he crept up close to his mammy, laid hold of the skirt of her woollen petticoat, but stood there, still fixed in the same attitude of immovable attention.

“Miss Calantha,” said the sufferer, for he was the first who saw her, “I am glad to see you. It is very good of you to come and take leave of one about to depart. It's sudden,” looking round upon his wife and children,—“it's a sudden call.”

“ Oh !” cried poor Mrs. Penny, bursting forth into a passion of tears, and finding words at length, “ What shall we do !—what will become of us ! And so good as you always were, Thomas ; and such a true, faithful servant of the Lord. It’s very hard—it’s very hard. So sudden, too——”

“ Don’t call it *hard*, Jenny, if you would have me die in peace. Don’t use that word, pray,” said the gardener ; and turning his languid eyes to Calantha, “ Tell her, will you, dear miss,—for who knows better than you ?—we must not call what He does hard.”

“ Oh, but such a husband ! such a man ! and when such bad, good-for-nothing wretches live and thrive—oh, husband ! let me call it hard—for it is hard—hard, hard, to part with you.”

And the poor, heart-broken woman, throwing herself upon her knees, by the bedside, burst into a fresh passion of tears.

Tears had been slowly gathering into the eyes of the solitary child, and his little face had been working with strong emotion ; but at this, his infant efforts at self-control under the woe he felt gave way, and he burst into a loud roar.

The poor man looked disturbed and distressed.

“Take him away—take him away,” said Calantha hastily, observing this. “Dear Mrs. Penny, be calm, be resigned.”

One of the bigger boys now lifted the roaring child up in his arms, who seemed incapable of making any resistance, and carried him into the garden, leaving him there to cry by himself.

At this moment, when nature was so strong with them all, the little stranger was as a stranger, indeed, to every one; even Calantha, intent upon comforting the unhappy wife, and tranquillising the last moments of the dying man, overlooked the intense sensibility of the child's feelings.

“My dear, dear Jenny! my dear, dear wife! Don't cry so; it's a-bursting of my heart to see it.”

“Oh, I wouldn't if I could help it!—I wouldn't if I could help it! But, dear me! dear me! what had we, any of us done, to bring such a judgment upon us?”

“What had Miss Calantha done?” said the

dying man, “that she should be *born* as she was. We have had a very happy life—it was of *His* goodness alone, and none of our doing. And now, Jenny, my dear, dear woman, it’s all over, and we must part. Let us do it as we ought to do. Say—do say, for my sake—let me hear you say, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’”

“Oh dear, dear, dear! How can I! how can I! my good, dear husband, and all these poor fatherless children! Don’t ask me, don’t; and there’s Tom Evans who’s drunk every night, and who beats his wife and children into the bargain, he can be as merry as a king, and as happy as can be. And you must fall off that ladder and die!”

“Would you rather have had him lying as he does before you—would you like better to see him as he is, or like Tom Evans?” asked Calantha, gently. “Doesn’t it comfort you, poor dear Mrs. Penny, to see him so peaceful and happy in his mind—to think of that place to which he is going? He’ll be happier than ever he was, Mrs. Penny; that’s what makes him so

composed now : he would be quite easy if you would try to be a little more resigned."

"Do, Jenny, do, dear woman—there—there——" as the poor thing tried to stop her cries and tears, and covering her head with her hands sank sobbing upon the bed,—“there, there, good, dear Jenny! And now, children, are you all here?"

"Yes, father," said all with one voice; "we're all here."

"And my own darling little Tim, my little man, he's here too: but where's the other child?" seeming suddenly to recollect him.

"Oh, Jack was forced to carry him into the garden, he cried so badly."

"Did you leave him alone, there?" asked the father.

"Yes, father. I wanted to get back to you."

"Fetch him again, he's but a little child; but maybe he'll remember it some time, that, when his little heart was bursting for his poor dear mammy, he was left out. Go and fetch him, Jack."

The child seemed to have some faint sense of what his foster-father feared for him; for when his friend Jack came to seek him, he had done crying, but looked sulky and offended—as some people might have called it—melancholy; and with feelings deeply wounded, as a kinder observer might have said.

He pushed Jack's hand aside, and refusing to come, turned his little back upon his friend, and walked sturdily away.

“Oh, Gideon! father sent for you; don't be a bad boy to-day; don't, Gideon, and mammy's crying so, too. Don't be a bad boy, don't vex mammy.”

The child turned round at this, eyed Jack for a moment doubtfully, then he lifted up his little frock and tried to dry his tears with it, in which Jack, very good-naturedly stooping down, helped him, saying,—

“Don't roar any more, Gideon, but come in and stand with the rest. Father's got something to say to us before he dies.”

“Have you brought in the strange child?” said

the gardener, whose voice was now fast becoming sepulchral and hollow, “bring him up to me — give me his little hand—have I got it?”

The soft, warm fingers were placed in his cold, damp hand. The child cried no more; he stood there, and again fixed his eyes in silence upon his foster-father’s face.

“Thou must be a good man, Gideon, and love God, and strive hard to go to Him. Look at me, I am going to God. He has been very good to me, and now He lets me die happy. I tried to serve Him from my youth. Yes, Gideon, I tried hard to do it. You’ll remember, perhaps, when you are a bigger boy, what I am saying; but you understand a little now. Miss Calantha! where’s Miss Calantha?”

She came forward a little.

“Give me your beautiful hand.”

He took it with some difficulty, held it for a moment between his, looking up at her face with an expression of intense meaning, then placing the child’s little hand in hers, he said,—

“You understand me;” and he glanced at his

weeping wife. "You must take him to yourself, now."

She understood that this was said because he thought poor, vehement Mrs. Penny, when left to herself, not well fitted for the management of such a child; Calantha felt the force of his appeal, and, kneeling down, she kissed the child in silence.

He understood the gesture and appeared satisfied, for he closed his eyes for a few moments; when he opened them again, the child had withdrawn his hand in silence from Calantha, had again crept round the bed, and again placed himself close to his foster-mother, holding her clothes.

"Miss Calantha ——"

She stooped down, for his voice was low and sunken.

"In spite of *that*," in a whisper, glancing at his wife as she knelt there, her face pressed against the bedclothes, sobbing as if her heart would break — "you take that child with you home."

She made a sign of assent with her head ; but, dreading to disturb Mrs. Penny, said no more.

Again he closed his eyes — again he opened them — they were becoming dim, and the darkness of death was gathering round him. He rallied his spirits, and found strength to deliver his last breath in words of pious exhortation to all his children, bidding them fear God and keep His holy law, and labour hard for an honest livelihood, and to protect and to provide for that good mother who had laboured so hard for them. Then, with a few more words of consolation to his poor wife, this good man sank to rest — in the sure hope of a blessed resurrection.

Calantha and her mother sat in the evening together, looking out upon the fine view which was presented by the drawing-room window, and upon the noble sunset before them.

The red orb was sinking beneath clouds streaked with heaven's most refulgent and glowing colours,

small clouds of golden lustre sailing in the crimson depths of distance.

They had been talking of the faithful servant they had lost, and discoursing upon the mysterious ways of Providence, and upon the unspeakable loss to the wife and children. The boys were all too young for any of them to fill their father's place, and the widow and family must be removed and provided for elsewhere.

"This will not be so difficult," said Mrs. Mordaunt; "poor Penny is such a handy, lively, clever woman, that she would soon adapt herself to any employment we can provide for her; her two youngest children can remain with her: the elder ones may continue to work in the garden."

"And Gideon?"

"Why, really, that is a difficulty. Poor child, he is the most real sufferer of all, perhaps, by this loss. We cannot hope that a stranger will have patience to rear him for the business carefully, as I am sure Penny would have done. And I don't know what we can do with him. I spoke to your father about it to-day, but he is very

busy now with his new coach-house, and he had not time to think about it. Do you think Mrs. Penny would keep him a little longer?"

"Mamma, I have a great favour to ask of you and my father. I don't think Mrs. Penny is quite fit to be intrusted with the care of that child. He is a remarkable child, believe me, and her husband's last injunction to me upon his death-bed was, to take him home under my own care. It would be a very great favour if I might."

"I don't understand this, Calantha; I thought you were perfectly satisfied with Penny's care and tenderness; and, as for the child himself, he loves her *violently*, for that odd word seems best to express the affection the little creature seems to feel—I think I never saw a child of that age capable of such passionate attachment."

"Children's feelings," said Calantha, who well remembered the history of her own early years, "are very often little observed or understood; and if this child had been properly schooled and disciplined, he would even already, I think, have learned, in some degree, to control this: but

that is what he will never learn under good Penny, into whose head such a thing as controlling feelings, justifiable in themselves, will, I believe, never enter. Besides, mamma, is it not true that a good deal of one's natural disposition is inherited, and that none but the real mother quite understands the child?"

"Well, my dear, that may all be very just, as most of your observations are, dearest Calantha; but I do not see how it bears upon this unfortunate case, as you are not the real mother yourself."

"I think Penny, the husband, had a strong persuasion that his wife, good woman as she is, was not exactly calculated to understand a child of such strong and delicate sensibilities as little Gideon seems to be: he hinted this to me more than once, and upon his death-bed spoke very decidedly upon the matter. He thought his wife would spoil the child, I believe, and that he would grow up, as so many children reared by too yielding mothers do, uncorrected and undisciplined. He used to say, sometimes, when I praised his wife's kindness to the child,—

‘ Ah! but, Miss Calantha, don’t let him be spoiled—he’s a fine lad; but my mistress is a sad spoil-child, if I did not interfere now and then.’ ”

“ And what will you be, Calantha?” asked Mrs. Mordaunt, smiling.

“ It seems presumptuous, perhaps, in me, so little accustomed to children as I have lately been, to fancy that I shall be able to do better; but, dear mamma, I lived in a large family, and I was a thoughtful child myself. I feel as if I knew a good deal about the matter, though, perhaps, you will laugh at me for saying so.

“ And then, I think,” she said, colouring a little at speaking thus of herself, “ those who have been obliged to take so much pains with themselves to become in some degree what they ought to become, and as I have been obliged to take in subduing my rebellious nature, will perhaps understand how to assist another in a task of something the same kind. I am sure I would not wish to undertake it if I thought there were any one about us here that was fitted for it. I hope I love the poor little thing too well for that.”

Mrs. Mordaunt's eyes glistened at the gentle humility of this speech, but she only said,—

“ *One* quality of a mother my Calantha does indeed possess, a quality too often wanting in the affection shewn to adopted children,—a disinterested desire for the child's advantage and happiness, even at the expense of the very affection to themselves which they so wish to inspire.”

“ I knew well enough how it would end,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “ Calantha is so high-flown and romantic in her notions. I told you so, or might have told you so—it's all one whether I did or not—that she would never rest and let that poor bastard be brought up in the only rational way. Remarkable child!—Pooh, pooh!—Every child's remarkable where there's only one. Calantha doesn't know what she's undertaking. But, as you say, my dear, if it will afford a source of pleasure and interest to her, poor thing! that alters the case. The child will be ruined, mark my words. I never saw a plan of this sort that

turned out well. But if she has a fancy for it, poor girl, why let her indulge it; but mark my words, Mrs. Mordaunt, the boy will disappoint her and turn out a scamp at last,—they always do.”

Mrs. Mordaunt hesitated, her husband was not a man of an enlarged or liberal mind, far less one in the least inclining to go out of his way to do a benevolent action: he had little confidence in such things. He usually thought the worst of plans and men, and abhorred any thing in the least out of the common course. This was one reason why he was so partial to the brilliant but very commonplace Lucilla, and that Calantha was so little of a favourite. Not as they thought, and every body thought, because the one was so handsome and the other deformed, but because the one was lively, commonplace, and *bornée*, and he understood her very well, and thought her very clever; and the other was high-souled, and of a strong intellect, fine genius, and enlarged views, and he could not understand her at all, and, indeed, thought her something of a fool.

Such are men in their generations, and such the fate of all who have passed beyond that circle of thought embraced by their fellows.

Yet Mr. Mordaunt nevertheless was, in the main, a sensible man, and saw clearly enough what came within the narrow scope of his vision.

And I think this idea may perhaps account for what has often puzzled me and others, why these people of circumscribed views not only often get the reputation of possessing more common sense than others far their superiors in intellect, but absolutely seem in some degree to deserve that reputation. Where the view is very much enlarged, and all the remote bearings of things discernible, the faculty of judging of their just relations must be greatly increased in difficulty, to say nothing of those promptings, colourings, and misleadings of the heart and fancy, which disturb the cool perceptions of genius and enthusiasm. Where people strive after and desire little, they will certainly avoid many of the mistakes, disappointments, absurdities, and contradictions, which mortify those who are earnest, sanguine, and aspiring after great, but remoter good.

It was so easy to prophesy evil from the course Calantha wished to adopt in the case of this child — so easy and so straightforward it would have been to have placed him at once in that lower sphere where either success or failure would be little noted—so easy to set aside the many reasons for hope afforded by the promising character of the boy—so easy to overlook those qualities which rendered a careful education for him so desirable —so easy to advise to keep the beaten track, and so certain, that if that track were but pursued, any failure, however great, would probably be never even remarked, and certainly escape censure, however great that failure might be. It was equally certain that if an attempt were made to attain better and higher things, anything short of the completest success would draw down universal censure. It was so easy to see and point out all this, that Mrs. Mordaunt's finer sense of things was embarrassed by the positive views her husband took of such matters ; she felt afraid he must be right, and did not know what to say or advise.

Not so Calantha : she was of a firm and deter-

mined nature, in spite of all her gentleness and apparent submission and facility; for she had a clear and penetrating eye—the eagle eye of a fine understanding—capable of high flights, yet in its loftiest aspirations preserving a just and distinct perception of the relations and magnitude of objects. She had probably, though unconfessed to herself, an instinctive distrust of her father's conclusions in things of this nature. He wanted sensibility she perceived, and he who is wanting in sensibility is incapable of forming a just judgment in all matters wherein sensibility is concerned; and in what human relation has it not its part? She had, strange as it may seem, much respect for the simple judgment of the feeling, affectionate, righteous-minded gardener, and his advice she resolved if possible to follow. So, in spite of her father's evil prognostications, and her dear mother's doubts and hesitations, to this resolution she had the courage to adhere; and, resisting all the misgivings of her own heart, which would and did perplex her very much, she thanked her father for his permission, and determined to take the child home.

Her difficulties and misgivings being exceedingly increased by the impossibility of getting her father to allow her the opportunity to explain her views and wishes with respect to the position he was to hold in the family, or to express distinctly any wishes or intentions formed upon his own part. Out of indulgence to herself, or rather out of indulgence to her mother's never-failing efforts for her happiness, he had yielded the point, as he said, decidedly against his judgment, only hoping that Calantha would indulge no high-flown, romantic notions about the boy; but what he exactly intended by this, or what she might hope to be suffered to do, remained all undefined and unsettled.

Under these disadvantages she took him, however, to the Hall, his little heart rent almost to distraction at the parting from his mammy.

**

CHAPTER II.

“They for the attempt and for the pains employed,
Do stand redeemed,
From the unqualified disdain that once
Would have been cast upon them.”

WORDSWORTH.

It was, indeed, an affecting sight.

The poor little child, screaming with passion, stretching out his little arms and calling for his mammy, as she, having kissed and blessed him, with tears streaming down her cheeks, gave him up to Calantha and resolutely walked towards that door of the garden which led to her own house; while Calantha, assisted by Alice, absolutely forced the little boy away.

It might have been managed perhaps better, but no one was aware of the extravagance of grief which the poor little thing would fall into.

Nobody, till the parting came. He might, perhaps, have been deceived and coaxed away to the great house without being aware of the misfortune hanging over him ; but Mrs. Penny was one who loved to take leave, and Calantha suffered her to be indulged in this.

As he saw her disappear and the door close after her, the violent struggles of the child became more than Alice could resist ; he broke from her, and, roaring and screaming with agony indescribable, called for "his mammy! his mammy!"

He got to the door by which she had disappeared, and, as he struck at it with all his infant force, in a vain attempt to open it, he screeched so dreadfully, that Calantha, at last quite frightened, allowed it to be opened.

Mrs. Penny's children were already packed in the spring-cart that was to carry them away ; she had just entered it, and, as the door opened, the unhappy child was just in time to see her drive off. His shrieks now became desperate. In vain Calantha, kneeling down by his side, taking him in her arms, and pressing him kindly

to her bosom, endeavoured to soothe and comfort him; his agonies, his despair, were fearful; till at last, quite exhausted by this storm of grief and passion, he sank down in her arms sobbing bitterly, and thus, assisted by Alice, she got him along, and the motion of being carried through the air soothing and tranquillising him, wearied and exhausted at last he fell asleep.

Beautiful cherub! as there he lay slumbering upon the little bed beside her own, which she had prepared for him. His cheek, like a full-blown rose, wetted with his tears, his long dark eyelashes resting upon it; his beautiful brown curls all tumbled about him; and his infant waxen hands lying listlessly upon the little quilt. He looked such a picture of innocence and of sorrow!

Calantha sat by and gazed upon him. Her heart had been almost broken by the scene of his distress; and her purpose had more than once faltered as she tore him away from those he loved so fondly. She sat there looking anxiously at him, and causes for anxiety were recollected and dwelt upon, which in her desire

for his welfare it seemed to her she had not sufficiently considered.

Would he not have been happier left to the chances, evil or good, such as they might be in that lowly life, under the care of one so passionately loved, and who loved him with equal sincerity? Was not this the simple obvious course to have pursued? Were not her father and mother right? What should she do with this passionate, vehement child? How would he be able to endure that host of ills which now, like hideous spectres suddenly summoned up, she began to anticipate for him?

Her father's contempt and dislike; her mother's indifference, to say the least of it; and then a formidable array of her sisters and sisters-in-law, brothers and brothers-in-law, all blaming her for what she had done; and of their children, all looking down upon the poor foundling with contempt and aversion.

She thought of unkind servants tyrannising over the defenceless child; of the impossibility of protecting him in her own helpless state, should she fall again into one of her illnesses.

After what she had just passed a sort of nervous dread took possession of her, at the idea of what a child of such a temper might and *could* suffer.

Poor Calantha! she sat leaning upon the rail of his crib looking at him, blaming herself, distrusting herself, asking herself if selfishness did not indeed lie at the root of her, in truth, most generous purpose, because he was so lovely, so interesting, and already too dear.

Oh! the purity of that heart where such love is called selfishness!

“Alice,” said Calantha, looking at her maid, and speaking in a grave, earnest tone, “I have endeavoured to be kind to you, and I believe you love me.”

Alice was not a woman of many words. She was a serious woman, as it is called; that is to say, she had been brought up among very religious people, of which description of persons, I am happy to say, a very, very large proportion

may—or should I say, used to—be found in this country. She had been selected by Mrs. Mordaunt to wait upon her daughter on account of her sterling qualities and excellent principles,—qualities and principles which displayed themselves externally in a certain rigidity of countenance, gravity of dress, and angularity of appearance, which made her the derision of the servants'-hall and housekeeper's room behind her back, though she knew well how to maintain her own dignity and the general respect when present.

She had a great reverence and affection for her young mistress, in spite of certain habits which, according to her views, bordered upon laxity; so far, at least, as regarded others, whose gayer life she never could bring her mistress to censure, even by a look, in spite of all her own grave hints and inuendoes. The enlarged charity, “which thinketh no evil,” is, as it were, the Corinthian capital of the Christian fane—the last beautiful flowing ornament at the summit of the pillar. To this such as good Alice rarely attain; but we must forgive them: they have done much who have learned to abhor sin,

and to deprecate levity as too often the forerunner of sin ; and we must excuse them if, in this abhorrence and this fear, they somewhat fall within the bounds of an enlarged love and charity.

“ Alice, I believe you love me,” Calantha had said.

“ Miss Calantha, it is not for a poor servant like me to say much about that. You have been the best friend, save my blessed father and mother, both now with God, that I ever had.”

“ I have tried to stand your friend when you wanted one,” said Calantha, alluding to the benefits she had conferred only in the generous hope to engage all the gratitude and affection of Alice to expand itself upon the child. “ And now, Alice, all I ask in return is, that you will be so kind to me as to undertake the care of this poor little boy.”

Alice looked rather surprised and alarmed at this opening. No servants like to have an unexpected addition made to the duties of the place they were hired to fill.

Calantha’s countenance fell as she observed this. Here was a difficulty at the very outset

upon which she had never calculated. She had felt assured that she had only to mention her wishes to Alice to receive her ready acquiescence, and her somewhat solemn preface was merely intended to engage the kindness of her maid to the child. She had not anticipated any difficulty in persuading her to undertake the charge.

“I’m not used to children, Miss Calantha. I never would take a nurse-maid’s place from a girl,” Alice said—and said no more.

“Mamma has been so kind as to say, Alice, that the under-housemaid may undertake the charge of this little child, and that he may sleep in the maids’ room ——”

“And quite the proper place for him in my opinion, if a poor servant may speak her mind,” Alice interrupted.

“Do you think so, indeed?” said Calantha, looking at her. “No, that I believe you do not. You are a Christian woman, Alice, and a good woman. The mixed characters that inevitably form part of a large establishment like my father’s are such that no young child

ought to be left to take his chance impressions from among them."

"I don't know, then, how poor children are to do," said Alice.

"Nor I," said Calantha; "but they have their fathers and mothers to look after them in most cases."

"They often look after them ill enough for what I see," said Alice, with the usual logic of her class.

"I don't perceive," said Calantha, "that this proves any thing in favour of our exposing this young child to evil influences."

"Bad enough at times, to be sure," Alice owned. Just before this time some very painful exposures of vice, upon occasion of which several servants had been discharged, coming to her recollection. "But," added she, "the under-housemaid that came last week seems a good-natured, well-behaved girl enough."

"But, Alice, I cannot trust this boy to any one but you, because I know you. I know you fear God, and are a faithful and pious Christian woman, and the care of a soul—oh, it is a fear-

ful, fearful thing! So I ask you as a favour, as the greatest favour you can do me, to help me in taking charge of this baby. I shall take it as a great favour, Alice, indeed I shall!"

It was beautiful to see the fervour with which she pleaded.

"If ever I have been kind to you, do this kindness to me. If I were strong and well myself," glancing at her poor wasted limbs, "I would not ask you to give yourself this trouble, I would do it all cheerfully myself; but I cannot, I know I cannot, Alice. 'Suffer little children to come unto me'—'Woe unto you if you offend one of these little ones.' Only think of these texts, Alice."

"Well, Miss Calantha, I don't say but what you say is right; but it's a thing I never thought to take upon myself to do, for I don't love children. The most of 'em's the troublesomest little creatures in the world; and to tell the truth, I think that's the most passionate creature I ever saw in my life. I am sure there's ancient Adam enough to be got out of *him*, as my poor father used to say."

Here was another unexpected difficulty. It was evident that Alice not only wanted that tenderness for little children which is usual among women, but had taken something like a dislike to this individual child. Oh, the difficulties that embarrass the path of those who step out of the common course to do good!

The perseverance it requires to persist in that course against all discouragements and obstructions, but oh! the rich reward, the mighty harvest which those who having nobly struggled and vanquished, reap for themselves and for the world!

The disinclination shewn by Alice for the task, though it increased her difficulties and apprehensions, did not cause Calantha to waver in her purpose, or abate in her endeavours, to persuade her into undertaking it. She was assured of the woman's principles; she knew she could rely implicitly upon her truth and justice. She felt certain, if she could persuade her to undertake the task, that the child would learn nothing from her that was evil; and though she might be wanting in all those endearing qualities which render children so

happy, yet that her temper was calm and her heart good ; and that little Gideon would, under her care, escape the evils of capricious tyranny in any of its numerous forms.

So she persisted,—

“ I think it is your duty, Alice, as I thought it was mine.”

“ I don’t see it was either of our duty,” replied Alice. “ If I am to venture to speak my mind, the child was well and happy with Mrs. Penny, if ever I saw a child so in my life. Mrs. Penny’s as good a woman as breathes, though I don’t say she’s quite so serious as I should wish her to be ; and I am not the only one as thinks that her house was a fitter place for that child than your chamber, Miss Calantha.”

“ If I were of that opinion I should have left him there. I see you will not help me—I am sorry—there was One who taught us,” and she lifted up her gentle, sweet, blue eye,—“ who taught us, that the priest and the Levite might pass by, but that he was blessed who stepped aside and helped the stranger—*who had no claim upon him*—in his necessity. If I have stepped

aside to do this thing, may God help and assist me, for I intended well!"

And then she said no more, but went up to the side of the bed where the little child lay, still fast asleep. His innocence, his sorrow, his defenceless and friendless situation, strengthened her purpose, and again those fears and misgivings were tranquillised, to which the last speech of Alice had given fresh force.

She stood looking at him some time, and then returned to her arm-chair, not far from which that worthy personage was still standing, expecting to be spoken to and entreated again.

"You may go," said Calantha, "for the present—it's near your tea-time: I will ring when I want you again."

"But, Miss Calantha——"

"You need say no more, I am answered. I have no right to demand this service from you: I am disappointed, perhaps, in you—that is all—but you are a good woman, Alice, I know that; but it is not the first time that I have believed you to be mistaken."

"Oh, Miss Calantha! you have such a way!

when you argue a thing, it puts me in mind of One—with great reverence be it said—who, young as He was, convinced the doctors of Israel. You would talk one out of one's senses. I don't mean to say—if you think there is Scripture for it, and the texts you quote are very strong—I am sure I wish to do my duty in all ways."

"That I am sure you do—I only wish I could convince you that such things are our duty, and our greatest duty."

"And I think the parable of the good Samaritan," continued the young preacher, "was expressly related to set before us this truth—that not only our obvious duties are expected to be performed, but that charity requires that we should *step aside*, as I said, when the occasion calls, to help whosoever needs our help; and that we should do it—not just any how—as we should have done ours, if we left this child to be brought up any how—but that we must do the very best we possibly can in such a case. You see the good Samaritan not only helped the man to an inn, but pro-

vided for all his expenses, comfortably, till he was cured."

"Oh, Miss Calantha! how you do talk like a book!"

"I wish you could read what I say in a book, and it would convince you much more easily, Alice. Come, come," said she, putting on her most winning manner, "I see you are coming round—I see you will oblige me."

The stiff features of Alice relaxed into a smile.

"You have your own way in every thing with me, always, and ever had since you were a child yourself."

'Dear, dear, what a mistake!' thought Calantha.

"Well, if it must be so, it must; I'll see to the poor thing: it's not the trouble I care for, but I do *not* like children, and he'll make such a rummage in your rooms, I hate to think of it," added Alice, with a sigh, going up to the side of the bed and looking at him. "He's in a sweet sleep as I ever saw; but there'll be a world to do when he wakens—see if there isn't:

for I never saw a child in such a dreadful passion in my life as when I carried him out of the garden—I thought he'd have kicked me all to pieces."

It was many, many days indeed, before the child recovered either his appetite or his spirits. What he suffered it is impossible to describe. It was evident that Alice made little progress in his affections, and was far from filling the place left vacant in his little heart; of Calantha he seemed afraid; he probably connected her in a considerable degree with his dreadful misfortune.

He moped about the room, was dull and obstinate; and Calantha dared not as yet let him go out of it, for fear he should be naughty and disgrace himself, and thus add to the general ill-will with which she found him regarded by the whole household. The weather was bad, and she could not send him into the air; the quiet of her days was disturbed, a quiet

so necessary to her delicate health ; the rest of her nights was broken even by the excitement of having a child with her in the room, to say nothing of the many anxious, painful thoughts with which she was beset, that discouraged her at the very commencement of her undertaking.

Mrs. Mordaunt, to make things worse, could not conceal that she was grievously disappointed and very anxious too. She had hoped to open a new source of interest and happiness for Calantha, by facilitating to her the means of carrying out this undertaking, and she had not sufficiently reflected upon the many vexatious trials of strength, spirits, and patience, which the charge of *any* child necessarily entails, and still more of one under the present circumstances. She began to regret what she had done, and to wish Calantha would abandon the scheme.

This was the hardest trial of all, her kind mother evidently evincing dissatisfaction with the plan. It tried her more than all her own disappointments and misgivings ; but her generous love and Christian charity triumphed at last.

She persevered. Gradually the child's spirits revived; he began to play about like other children; Alice became rather fond of him; he learned to tolerate Alice; and Calantha was soon relieved from one portion at least of the burden she had imposed upon herself; and the remaining ones she found herself quite equal for the present to support.

CHAPTER III.

“The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball and of Algarsife . . .
And if aught else, great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys and of trophies hung,
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.”

Il Penseroso.

How difficult it is to swim against the tide !

How difficult to carry out any human undertaking against the ordinary course and connexion of human affairs ! Of this truth every one who attempts to advocate a new principle, to correct a long-standing abuse, to withstand a long-maintained oppression, and, above all, to undertake some unusual act of munificence or liberality, speedily becomes aware ; and, alas for him if he have not well considered those things before he undertake it !—alas for him

who sitteth down to build a tower, and hath not calculated the cost thereof!

The unexpected obstacles which arise—the difficulties which present themselves almost, as it were, accidentally; the failing of the spirit, uncheered by general approbation and sympathy, under the formidable task; the misgivings of the heart, venturing upon its own responsibility into new and untried ways;—such things besetting the most earnest and zealous spirit, if not anticipated and calculated upon, are apt to enfeeble the strongest determination; and actually do drive too many from their generous purposes.

Their most generous and disinterested purposes of good.

In the case of the unfortunate being before us—the case, indeed, of all those the unfortunate offspring of unlicensed passion—all the connexions of life and circumstance are so tangled and confused, that obstruction and difficulty meet them, and those benevolent enough to take interest in them, at every step of their career.

Nor are the difficulties set aside, as some may think, by having recourse to the easy maxim that, as it is no fault of theirs, they ought to be treated as if it were no fault, and placed at once in the sphere they would in another case have occupied.

Let the parents who have, by their own guilt, entailed this inheritance upon their children, lay no such flattering unction to their souls.

Nothing can compensate, to an illegitimate child, the misfortune of being illegitimate—nothing can compensate to any child the simple fact meeting us at the outset, that of belonging to parents not legally and inseparably united.

This is no evil created, as some have perhaps been led to think, by the artificial arrangements and conventions of man in society: its source is in nature—in that nature, the Author of which made marriage coeval with the creation of man;—healthfully to rear the precious plant wherein lies the hidden germ of eternity, requires the element of home—and marriage is the foundation of home. Wherever or howsoever the sacredness of marriage is not revered, depend upon it

there the man will ever be found imperfectly developed.

In the case of the unfortunate Gideon, it is true, it might be said his was but the lot of an orphan child; but how wide is that assertion from a just estimate of the disadvantages under which he laboured, or the difficulties with which Calantha had to contend!

The legitimate orphan child, be he who he may or where he may, has one great advantage with which he starts in life: his *place* is marked; he is to set out from the place occupied by his parents. Every well-meaning friend has at once a sort of measure given him as to how he ought to be treated and how educated. Every indifferent person understands this, acquiesces in and supports it. But how different is the case of the unhappy *natural* child!—his place is undefined; he has literally none in society; he is the sport of the caprice, the prejudices, the carelessly adopted notions, of every one with whom he has to do. By some he will be pitied, as most unfortunate; by others almost loathed, as tainted and degraded by the vices to which he

owed his being. One is for elevating him to the rank and treating him as belonging to that of the best-endowed of his parents — another for sinking him almost below the level of the lowest. What one does for him another undoes ; the kind consideration of one but renders him more susceptible to the unkindness and contempt of others. He has not even the *memory* of a parent to cheer his poor solitary heart — that sacred memory so cherished, so sacred, which consoles whilst it hallows and elevates the soul of the orphan. He cannot even aspire to purify himself, without inflicting a wound upon that deep piety of the heart, that foundation-stone of the great infinite of piety, the reverence of the child for its parent.

Mystery of iniquity ! Trailing serpent, endless involutions of the consequences of Sin !

It would have required great strength of body, as well as of mind, for Calantha adequately to carry out the plan she had sketched for herself,

under the more than usual difficulties which surrounded her when she undertook her task; but failing health, poor thing! soon added its complications to the rest.

She was often too ill even to bear the little boy in her own room—often, for weeks and weeks together, obliged to leave him under the sole care of Alice. She, far too obstinate and narrow-minded to enter into the refined views of her mistress, now fondled and now scolded—now was much too strict, now as much too lax; at times, when she was at leisure to look after him, keeping the child almost a prisoner, lest he should get into mischief—at others, when she was too busy to attend to him, suffering the brave and enterprising little boy to make excursions alone into all the forbidden precincts of stable-yard, kitchen, servants' hall, garden, and even to wander to distances that none but the children of the poor, at his early age, are ever allowed to venture upon. For though now treated with the attention common to children of the higher classes, Gideon had not lost the hardihood and courage due to his rougher beginning; and many

a day would the child come home from wandering in the woods—his little frock torn, his large straw hat filled with tufts of grass, foxgloves, and other wild flowers, his face bronzed with the sun, and his hands and knees torn with scrambling—to be shook and scolded by Mrs. Alice for wandering so far, and to stand, his large eye fixed upon her with a look of sturdy defiance, proper to one who knows he has done nothing really wrong, feels he is treated unjustly, and experiences what tyranny is before he has found for the idea a name. Yet docile and gentle he was ever found when treated with justice on the part of any one.

Strange! I was going to say, but I will not say strange. I believe such feelings are common to many, many children—I believe this deep sense of justice and injustice exists spontaneously in most hearts—in some springing up to fountains of living waters, in others lost amid the rubbish, or hidden by the weeds and thorns of this world—in some, alas! alas! irretrievably buried and sunk under the loathsome mire of vice and depravity.

It is an affecting thought to look upon a great criminal, or some loathsome, degraded victim of vice, and to reflect that he was once a pure-minded, innocent little child.

To resume. I will not, therefore, say strange, and yet wondrous were the thoughts and feelings already disclosing themselves in the pure character of this child's fancy.

Calantha had begun to open his mind by her ballads and her stories. She had some notions of her own upon this subject, and her stories were very rarely of good and bad little boys and girls; perhaps she might be over-refining, but she had a notion that too much of such histories is not good. She thought you narrowed the child's heart, and lowered the tone of the character, by turning its attention too much to those with whom it might compare itself; she thought that generous enthusiasm after good was, in early youth, better fitted to nourish the soul than much self-inquisition; she endeavoured, therefore, to make her little man emulous of all that was great, noble, courageous, self-denying, truthful, and loyal in man, rather than to be measuring

himself with other little bad or good boys of his own age.

Mind, I have not altogether made up my mind whether I am of her opinion with respect to such stories of good or bad boys and girls; but I think, as the saying is, she had got hold of the "tail of a truth," and that such stories should be used with more discretion than they often are.

Calantha had taken an heroic, lofty view of her little friend's position. Her imagination was lively and highly wrought. She looked upon him as some knight of old, abandoned in a forest, to be reared by some pitying fairy far from the walks of men, and to be sent forth, armed only with his trusty sword and his own good courage, to contend in a world teeming for him with dragons and monsters.

And she desired to endow him with the shield of faith, and the helmet of righteousness, and the sword of the Spirit, that so he might be able to overcome the force of the Evil One.

In more sober words, she felt that with a temper such as his, if life were sunk into inglorious oblivion, his character must degrade, and

he fall among the lowest in society; that he must fight his way to eminence, which was for him essential to usefulness, and happiness, with efforts and struggles not appointed to ordinary men; and, therefore, that he ought to be gifted with a more unflinching courage, a loftier emulation, a nobler self-dependence, a more generous faith, than belongs to the character or is needed in the career of ordinary men.

So her tales were such as we may imagine in the days of chivalry some old crone, sitting in the low-arched, gloomy chamber, relating to her charge of young unfledged warriors, the Rinaldos and Rodolphos in petticoats, around her, sitting and listening upon rude three-legged stools, by the crackling pine-wood fire.

Old ballads were ransacked, and never was Gideon weary of hearing of the brave encounters with the fierce dragon of Wantley, who laid the country under contribution—of the gallant squire who stepped forth, “Witherington he was by name”—of captives set free from the hands of giants—and of little Jack, that smallest and bravest of heroes, who smote the monster in his

den ; imbibing, in short, with breathless interest, those treasures of disinterested courage, faith, and loyalty, that lay at the heart of chivalry.

She read to him the Bible, and so did good Alice, without fail. Long before he could read himself, that language, the very crystal shrine of thought, became native as it were to his tongue. His little heart, nourished upon such food, grew to as big a heart as ever beat within an infant bosom,—swelled when the loud wind, bowing their plumed heads, sounded amid the tops of the high fir-trees in the wood, with a feeling of inexplicable grandeur, under this impression of the awful force from above,—melted to tears when Calantha, sitting under those fir-trees, he leaning against her knee, his chubby arms thrown across her lap, his head thrown a little back, his eyes fixed upon hers, he listened to some tale of brave self-sacrifice in a just cause. Sometimes, when Calantha was too ill to be seen, and he had strayed out alone, how would that little heart beat with awe as he penetrated alone into some dark thicket of holly, hazel, and brambles, to him replete with mysterious terrors, resolving by

no terrors to be daunted; or how bravely would he scramble up the sides of the rocky steep, amid clattering sand and rubbish, wounding his little hands and knees, and proud, not frightened, to see them bleed!

These were his heroic moods; but a softer vein was there: and then the little boy would steal softly along, peeping into flowers and gathering treasures of feathery grass, lost in a sense of the unutterable beauty of colours, and forms, of sound and sense—feelings which, *if* possessed by a child, are exquisite beyond that of which our grosser sense can form an idea—as I, with many others, remember, and with a certain fond regret declare.

But all this time the child kept advancing in age with no defined place in the family—no avowed purpose in his rearing—for education it could scarcely be called. He neither belonged to one portion of the household nor the other—neither ranking among the dependants nor the masters.

Sometimes caressed, sometimes scolded away by the servants; never upon any occasion noticed by Mr. Mordaunt, except a hasty order to stand

out of his way when he met him might be so called ; seldom addressed by Mrs. Mordaunt, whom indeed he rarely saw ; not allowed to enter the drawing or dining-rooms, in short, living like a little fairy Pacolet, attached to Calantha and Alice, and the three rooms they occupied.

CHAPTER IV.

“Triumphant Umbriel on a scone’s height
Clapp’d his glad wings, and sate to view the fight.”
Rape of the Lock.

PEOPLE had come and gone during this time.

Sons with their wives, and daughters with their husbands and their children, and general company such as meet at dinner-parties in country houses; but Gideon had seen nothing of them, except as far as watching their carriages, and observing their horses, in the proceedings of which he, like other little boys, took the most intense interest.

But it was now more than eighteen months since, owing to various circumstances, any family party had been assembled at Mordaunt Hall, and now there was to be a grand assemblage.

It was the anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Mor-

daunt's fortieth wedding-day, and it was to be made a sort of jubilee.

All the married sons and daughters, and all their children, were to be assembled together.

And they all were assembled together.

Autumn has fallen into the sere and yellow leaf—that leaf itself is beginning to leave the stem, and to strew the gravel walks with gold and crimson, and the wind sings mournfully among the trees of the plantations, and whistles through the long passages, or may be heard solemnly booming over the distant woods. The heavy clouds roll in gloomy grandeur towards the horizon, dropping their black curtains over the departing sun, who has retired, as they used to say, to his western chambers.

It is a grey, gloomy November night without.

Within the large drawing-room is one blaze of cheerful light. The two large chandeliers are filled with candles, and are glittering and sparkling, bravely reflected by the immense mirrors in

rich old gilded frames of wreathed flowers, which reach from ceiling to floor. An immense wood fire is blazing in the chimney, and sheds a dazzling brightness upon the fender and the large brazen knobs, or dogs, and bright bars which hold in the wood. The snow-white marble chimney-piece is surmounted by another glass with girandoles, and carving and gilding rich and fine. Dark-green velvet are the chairs and curtains, lightened by rich gilding too; and many are the settees and sofas, arm-chairs and elbow, small chairs and *chaises-longues*, drawn in a large cheerful circle round, and filled with a gaily-dressed, handsome company, every one of which are relations.

Mr. Mordaunt is getting rather old, he is almost grey, and he stoops, and he has the gout every year; but he still looks handsome, animated, and gentlemanlike to a degree. There he sits in his own peculiar arm-chair, very large, most comfortably stuffed and pillowed it is, of massive build, and seems *planted* in its place by the fire, for indeed it is too heavy to be easily moved. He has one of those footstools called most irre-

verently a "heaven upon earth," before him, upon which his still handsome, though somewhat gouty, leg is resting.

Opposite to him, in a most comfortable *bergère*, sits Mrs. Mordaunt, in a dress of dove-coloured silk; her shoulders, neck, and bosom, buried in fine laces; the lace of her cap, or head-dress, falling most charmingly upon her matron cheek, still pure and unwrinkled, and her large calm blue eye fixed with benignant serenity upon the group she is watching. By her side sits her eldest son's wife, a fine, handsome woman of calm, genteel manners and deportment, holding a little boy by the hand, to whom she is shewing pictures; over her chair leans her husband, looking now at his youngest son, now at other groups in the room.

Next to Mrs. Bevis Mordaunt sits the eldest married daughter of the house, Mrs. Archer,—she who had been Emma, with the exception of Lucilla reckoned the handsomest of the family. She is still very handsome, holds herself erect, and dresses so as to display her fine face and figure to the greatest advantage. She is now, however, though splendidly dressed, sitting as if

she did not particularly enjoy family parties — in a lounging, idle kind of way, carelessly knotting; and lifting up her head now and then, she exchanges a glance of rather sarcastic meaning with her husband, a tall, handsome, particularly well-dressed man, who is looking over a portfolio of caricatures at a table at the opposite side of the room. Mrs. Bedingfield, who was Julia, the second sister, occupies the next place. She is not so handsome as her sister, but is equally well dressed; she is watching what is going on, and every now and then making terrific yawns, which she hides as well as she can, calling from time to time to one of her many beautifully dressed children, boys and girls, all with hair curled like wax dolls, to do this, or abstain from that, to which notices none, or very little, attention is paid.

Her husband is upon the other side engaged with Lucilla — Mrs. Chandos — in an animated argument with Mr. Mordaunt. Or rather, they being of opposite opinions, are engaged against each other, and Mr. Mordaunt is playing the part of moderator. The debate is lively — the shrill

voice of Lucilla may be heard making the most positive assertions in a matter of which she is confessedly ignorant—but what matters that? She is clever enough to divine the truth of things without the necessity of examination, by the unquestionable power of her instinctive divination. Her bright eyes are brighter—the rich pink on her cheek yet pinker—her shrill, clear voice yet shriller and clearer than ever—she is grown very much handsomer even than she was when she was married.

Her cheek is so smooth, her eye so bright, her brow so clear, she seems never to have known what sorrow, vexation, or anxiety was since she married Mr. Chandos.

Several children busy at cards—all children of the present company—come next; then there is a break, and we come to the head of the circle.

But I forgot Calantha. She is lying upon a *chaise longue*, covered with an eider-down quilt, just behind where Mrs. Archer sits. Her soft blue eyes are engaged watching the following little scene.

Mr. Chandos is seated with a child upon his lap,

and Mrs. Ernest Mordaunt, the second son's wife, a remarkably sweet young woman, and the bride upon this occasion, is leaning forward, while her husband sits on a low stool at her feet.

They are all engaged with the child, a little girl.

Mr. Chandos is pale, very pale; and his beautiful countenance, though calm and composed, bears the impression of suffering and a gentle shade of melancholy. Nothing can be conceived more refined, more *elegant* than his appearance. (An unknown but good-natured critic has quarrelled with me for using the term "*elegant* man." I know no better to express a grace the result of modern cultivation, yet far beyond that conventional grace called gentlemanlike merely.) It is so difficult to find words to *paint* with — I want form and colours to place Mr. Chandos before you as I would fain have you see him.

He has a fair complexion, and a light, not dark, blue eye; his hair is slightly powdered, that fashion had not yet gone out; his dress was more simple than that of the others, but there was an air of distinction about it which theirs rather

wanted. He holds the little girl upon his lap, his own, and his only child.

The young lady—Ernest's wife—is pressing the little thing to sing, and she, with the prettiest little unaffected shyness, crossing her lovely tiny legs, as displayed, in her miniature socks and small blue shoes, by her short snow-white, simple frock, and holding her father's hand with her pretty, dimpled fingers, is saying, "No, I can't," then turns up the face, full of infant innocence and beauty, towards her father, and shakes her little head,—“No, no—I can't.”

“Now do, Kitty!—there's a dear Kitty!—there's a darling!”

“I would if I could—'deed I would, but I can't.”

“Nay, Kitty dear—don't say can't; Kitty can sing very prettily if she will.”

“Sing, Kitty, when you are asked,” says Mr. Chandos; but the command is issued in such a tender, loving voice.

She puts her pretty head on one side, her finger on her lip, and seems to muse for a moment.

And then begins, without further prelude, like a little bird,—

“ ‘ When I was little tiny boy,
With, heigh ho! the wind and the rain;
The rain it did rain, and the wind it did blow,
With heigh ho!—heigh ho!’ ”

Got thus far, she stops short, and says,—

“ Papa, there’s a boy in the hall.”

“ Can Kitty sing another verse?” says Edith.

“ Oh! Kitty can’t sing about man’s estate, and rogues, and knaves; her mouth’s too small to let such things come out of it,—isn’t it, Kitty? But sing the first verse over again, you darling little warbler!” cries Ernest, taking up the tiny foot, and kissing it.

Kitty smoothed her frock down gravely with her hands, resettled herself, and looked up at her father rather wistfully.

“ Papa, there’s a *poor* boy in the hall.”

“ Yes, my darling, sing it again.”

“ ‘ When I was a little tiny boy,
With, heigh ho! the wind and the rain.’ ”

“ Papa, a little boy *is* in the hall.”

“ What does the child mean?” asked Ernest.

“ You haven’t finished, Kitty,” said his wife.

For answer Kitty turned away, scrambled up, by the assistance of the breast of her father’s coat, till she stood upon his lap, in which position she just reached to his face, and putting her little mouth close to his ear, whispered,—

“ If you’ll go with me to fetch the boy, I’ll—give—you—a KISS.”

“ Two?” said Mr. Chandos.

She looked, as she thought, very clever, and said,—

“ One boy—one kiss.”

“ What does she mean about a boy?”

She had by this time contrived to scramble down upon the floor, and there she stood pulling at her father’s hand with all her might.

“ Come, papa!—come, papa!”

He was never accustomed to resist her long; the tiny child was soon dragging the tall man towards the door.

It was a large and rather low hall, with old oak beams in the ceilings, and the floor covered

with slabs of black and white stone, the only furniture being some mahogany tables, so ancient as to be almost the colour of ebony, and several quaintly-formed mahogany chairs of the same hue, and apparently the same date.

As in many old-fashioned houses, the stairs came down straight into the hall, occupying the centre of the side opposite the entrance-door, the richly-ornamented rails and banisters descending upon each side, and turning off at the lowest stair into a sort of scroll.

Upon the lowest step of the stair, his feet upon the hall-floor, the little boy was sitting, dressed very simply in a little coatee of white jean, striped with blue; but his dress, though plain, was particularly neat and nice, and such as a gentleman's child might be expected to wear.

He was sitting quite alone, in rather a disconsolate attitude, his face turned towards the banisters, and trying to amuse himself by drawing his small fingers through the scrolls of the iron-work.

He did not look up with childish curiosity

when the door opened, but seemed to turn his head rather more away.

Kitty, who was about three years younger, and about half his size, whispered to her father,—

“ ‘There’s the boy, papa!—why does poor boy sit here all by himself?’ and she kept pulling Mr. Chandos gently on.

Then suddenly loosing his hand, she scudded across the floor, and sitting herself down by him, the lovely child, with the most artless cordiality, addressed him with,—

“ ‘Little boy! why don’t you come in?’

He turned round at her as she spoke, and then turned his head away, and resumed his occupation.

“ ‘Why don’t you come in, little boy?—I’m come to fetch you.’

And she took hold of his sturdy, brown hand with her little, delicate fingers.

“ ‘Come—come!’

But he gently drew his hand away, and turning his face still further from her, put it close to the rails.

Mr. Chandos had come up by this time, and stood looking at them. Little Kitty had got up, and was trying with the might of both her tiny arms to turn the resisting face towards her.

She succeeded at last. Gideon looked up at her, and smiled good-humouredly, but then seeing Mr. Chandos, turned his head against the rails again.

"My good little man," said Mr. Chandos, stooping down, and speaking to him with that extreme kindness and gentleness which won every creature's love and confidence whom he addressed, "what are you doing here, sitting all alone? We are come to take you to the other children."

"Yes, come—come!" persisted little Kitty, pulling at him again.

He still resisted, but he looked round once more, and smiled.

"Speak, my little man," said Mr. Chandos; "will you come with us?"

"No—I don't go in there," he answered.

"Why not?—who are you?—what's your name, my man?"

“ I’m Gideon.”

“ And whose son are you ?”

“ Mr. Nones’.”

“ Mr. Nones !” repeated Mr. Chandos, struck with the extraordinary name ; “ who can Mr. Nones be ?—I never heard of him.”

“ I don’t know,” said the child, now turning to look at the little Kitty’s blue sash and ribands, which he seemed to admire very much.

“ You mistook, my dear—I asked you whose child you were,” repeated Mr. Chandos, struck with the character of the child’s countenance, and his great apparent strength and beauty ; “ whose child are you, my dear ?”

“ Mr. Nones’.”

“ Does Mr. Nones—or Nuns, I suppose—live in this house ?”

“ No.”

“ Where do you live then ?”

“ With Miss Calantha.”

“ Ha ! . . . I have heard something of that !” thought he, and a dim recollection of a child adopted into the family, to which he had paid

little attention, for, in truth, he had been seldom at Mordaunt Hall since his marriage, came into his recollection.

“ You live at the gardener’s cottage, I think ?”

“ No, I don’t—I live with Miss Calantha.”

“ Why did you come away from the gardener’s ?”

“ *My* mammy went away from me,” said he, turning away : his heart always swelled at the recollection of what he thought a desertion.

“ Was the gardener’s wife your mammy ?”

“ Yes, she was.”

“ And were you her child ?”

“ No, I’m Mr. Nones’.”

“ Who told you, my dear, to call yourself Mr. Nones’ child ?” said Mr. Chandos, struck and affected now he at last understood the meaning of the enigma.

“ Mrs. Alice did.”

“ Did she tell you to say so ?”

“ Yes ; I said I was Miss Calantha’s boy, and she said I must never say that no more, but say I was Mr. Nones’, for so I was — and so I never do ; but I live with Miss Calantha.”

The child was evidently becoming more communicative and at ease, for Kitty was using all her little winning arts to get acquainted with him. He turned round altogether at last, and the two children sat there side by side, beginning a sort of infantile conversation—half conversation, half play.

Kitty laughed in her merry, innocent way, and Gideon smiled, and looked very happy ; and Mr. Chandos, struck and affected, stood there watching them.

Filled with pity and admiration for the fine, interesting-looking child, and filled—but when was not his heart filled to overflowing?—with love for his prattling, innocent, little Kitty.

The door of the drawing-room again opened, and there was a general rush into the hall. Blind-man's-buff had been proposed, and the proposal received with a shout of approbation ; the children came pouring forth, followed by the papas and mammas.

Calantha came out with the rest, leaning upon the arm of her brother Ernest. She looked

more pale and languid to-day than usual, perhaps she was fatigued with the unaccustomed bustle of so large a party.

The moment she appeared Mr. Chandos started forwards to offer her his support for her other arm, which she accepted, slightly colouring. He had not the remotest idea of the existence of feelings that once, perhaps, had agitated her heart, so his attentions to her were perfectly unrestrained, as those of the most affectionate brother-in-law. The conviction of this ignorance had been her support and consolation in all her secret struggles, and the admiration and affection he openly shewed her her sweetest reward for her triumphs over herself.

The two children were left sitting together upon the lowest stair, where they remained, side by side, very demurely watching the proceedings of the others.

“Come, Kitty,” said one of her cousins, a boy three times as big as herself, “come along, and play at blind-man’s-buff.”

“Let’s have little Kitty blinded first,” was the general cry, for Kitty was universally popular.

He was going to take Kitty up in his arms, and carry her to the rest.

“Don’t!” said she, resisting; “let Kitty alone. Kitty don’t like buff.”

“She’ll be knocked to pieces in the scuffle, George,” said his father, Mr. Archer; “let her alone. What’s this child she’s got by her side? What’s your name? Whose boy are you?”

“Mr. Nones’.”

“Calantha,” said Mrs. Archer, “who’s that child sitting upon the stairs by Kitty? Mr. Chandos, do you see?”

“Yes,” he said, “I think I guess who the child is. He says he lives with you, Calantha.”

She coloured, and said, —

“I am, perhaps, so foolish ——”

“Foolish!” he cried, kindly; “when did you ever do what was foolish? He must amuse and interest you.”

“So he does very much.”

Mrs. Ernest, newly introduced into the family, cheerful, simple, and amiable, now came up with, —

“Who is that child sitting by the adorable

Kitty? I never saw such a beautiful child in my life."

"Oh," put in Mrs. Bedingfield, tossing her head, "we know pretty well, 'I guess,' who *he* is. But I thought, Calantha, it was always an understood thing that when *my* children came here, he was to be kept out of the way. People may enjoy their own romantic notions of course, but where other people's children are concerned, certain proprieties must be respected."

"La!" cried Lucilla, who overheard this, and one of whose characteristics it was, wrong or right, always to seize an opportunity for contradiction, and who was accustomed to carry out her contradiction with a certain air of triumphant assurance that she was infallibly right, infinitely provoking to such people as Mrs. Bedingfield,—
"La, Julia! what starched notions you have got! What contamination can the poor little foundling carry in his coat-sleeve that will infect your supremely righteous children? They're ten times more likely to mischief him, I'm sure, in spite of all their piety and stuff."

And she went up to the stairs, and placed herself by Kitty's side, saying,—

“ Well, little one, where did you pick up your new acquaintance ? ”

“ In the hall,” said Kitty. “ Poor boy ! he mayn't come into the drawing-room.”

“ Mayn't come in ! — what nonsense ! Mayn't play with the others either, I dare say. There, child, get up, and run about, can't you, like the rest ? ” giving him a rather vivacious push ; “ up with you, and off with you ! ”

The children were already at high play.

“ No, thank you,” said Gideon, resisting the push ; “ I'd rather stay here.”

“ Why, you stupid child, you ! Get up and run about when I bid you.”

She was urgent, but the child was obstinate.

And now, Calantha, walking slowly, and with difficulty, supported by the arms of Ernest and Mr. Chandos, approached the spot.

“ Thank you, Lucilla,” said she ; “ but pray don't. I would rather, if you please, that the child should be left to himself. He will be quite

happy if allowed to sit there, and watch the others. Thank you very much ; but it is better to let him alone — indeed it is.”

“ How absurd of you, Calantha ! I never saw anything so weak as you are. Nobody’s prejudices are too absurd to be considered by you. What harm *can* the poor child do Julia’s little pieces of propriety by playing with them ? Get up, and get along, child ! ” said she, again pushing him. “ Never mind Calantha, she’s a prej——, mind me, and go and play.”

She pushed him up, and pushed him on,

When Mrs. Bedingfield again came up, saying, with a good deal of heat,—

“ I didn’t bring *my* children here to associate with creatures picked up at the door, Lucilla ; and if you choose to let Kitty keep such company, *my* girls sha’n’t. Do as you please, Calantha, but I and Mrs. Archer, if the child is to continue under this roof, have made our resolutions, and are determined to make our stand at once.”

“ A stand ! ” cried Lucilla, contemptuously,—
“ a stand ! about such a mighty matter ! I declare you righteous people are the most odious,

barbarous, hard-hearted wretches breathing. Yes, Julia, I'll speak the truth, when I please, though you do look thunder. As if this child, picked up at the door — or picked out of the kennel, what care I? — was not, with his dear bronzed, beggar face — if you will have it so — worth a whole bushel of your pale, milk-wash, curled young gentlemen !”

“ Beggar ! — aye, beggar ! pass for that — worse a good deal than that ——”

“ Lucilla ! — Julia ! — for pity's sake ——” remonstrated poor Calantha, with her pale face and agitated voice, endeavouring in vain to interrupt the now excited ladies. She did not say, “ Look at the child !” but her eyes glanced that way. They were too much heated to attend to her, but went on with their argument, speaking of his condition in the plainest terms, and without thought or regard of the presence of any one, least of all of the boy himself, who was but a young child, and who could not, indeed, understand the force of all they said ; enough, however, he did understand — that he was a beggar ; and for some reason or other, which to his con-

fused intellects was the more dreadful for being unintelligible, unfit to play with the other children.

He stood there, his eyes fixed upon the speakers, with an expression of utter dismay and distress upon his face; at last he went up to Calantha, and his little countenance one glow, said,—

“Gideon ain’t a beggar — beggars have rags on.”

At this Lucilla turned round, and laughed.

“No, to be sure, child,” looking contemptuously at her sister, whose husband’s affairs were known not to be in the best condition. “No beggars without rags. Never heard of such a thing!”

But Calantha made no answer, except by laying her thin, wasted hand upon the little boy’s head.

“Calantha,” he said, looking up at her, after having considered a few seconds, “What’s Gideon?”

“A good boy, I am sure,” said Mr. Chandos.

But at this moment Mr. Mordaunt came up,

and looking with considerable displeasure at Calantha, said,—

“ Calantha, I thought this matter had been understood between you and me from the first. I wonder you can be guilty of such a very great impropriety. ‘Tom — Jack — what’s the boy’s name? — Gideon, go away. It’s not your place to play with the little boys of this house. Mind, sir, don’t let me see you here again. Calantha, if you will not do your duty, you force me to do it.

“ If,” he continued, with a tone of moderation and benignity, “ you do not teach the child to keep his proper place, others will teach the lesson in ruder terms for you.”

And quite satisfied with his own rational view of the subject, Mr. Mordaunt turned away.

The little boy had stood, holding Calantha’s hand during this address, eyeing Mr. Mordaunt with a dauntless look, almost approaching to defiance. At its conclusion, without being bidden, he dropped the hand he held, and sliding through a green swing-door which led to the servants’ apartments, disappeared in a moment.

He never came again into the hall during the week that the children stayed.

The face of Kitty was working with various emotions during this scene, of which, of course, she understood very little; that grandpapa — grandpapa, a very awful person in her eyes — was angry with the poor little boy, was to her the terrible circumstance of the case. Yet, with that instinct of justice, which I have mentioned as so natural to children, she felt sure he had not deserved it.

Children *feel* morally before they *think*. Her little face was quite piteous. Mr. Chandos, dropping Calantha's arm, took his little darling in his arms to comfort her.

She laid her little head upon his breast, as if she wanted comfort very much.

She soon, however, lifted it up again, and looking at her father, said, interrogatively and doubtfully, —

“ He wasn't a naughty boy, though, papa?”

“ No, my darling. He did not know he was not to come into the hall; he went away, you see, as soon as he was bid.”

CHAPTER V.

“ Loving she is, and tractable though wild ;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes,
And feats of cunning. . . .
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn’s,
Forth startled from the fern where he lay couch’d.”

WORDSWORTH.

LUCILLA was not to be moved from her opinion even by her father. She attacked him upon the subject with the utmost freedom ; and he had to defend himself by being as brief and obstinate upon his side as she was clamorous and positive upon hers.

Calantha looked distressed and tired ; Mr. Chandos wearied and disconcerted. The time had long since gone by when the sparkling beauty of the fair speaker’s eyes, the dazzling lustre of her heightened complexion, or the animation of her bright countenance, could atone

for the want of softness in her voice and gentleness in her manners. The time was also past when the right which often did lie at the foundation of her opinions could atone in his eyes for the unreasonable and dictatorial manner with which they were enunciated. They who are found to be as positive when they are mistaken as when they chance to be right, will soon find their opinions regarded by others as the mere effect of chance.

Caprice was the word Mr. Chandos had long mentally affixed to the cause and origin of Lucilla's proceedings; and though severe, he was but too strictly just. Once delivered from the magic delusion of his passion, he measured her qualities with an unbiassed eye. He found, alas! in her, whom all the world conspired to praise as so clever, so generous, so good-natured, and so kind, a character influenced either by caprice, love of power, or the desire to make a sensation, as it is called; possessing a head certainly not wanting in a certain cleverness, and a heart rather careless than bad. The good-nature, which every one else praised, arose, as he saw it, from a self-

opinion which could not be mortified, joined to the satisfaction of being always the prominent figure in every society she entered, and from the pleasure she took in the exercise of power, which every act of her so-called good-nature supposed. How easy it is to appear good-natured when the spirits are high, health invulnerable, and means abundant !

He missed the influence of higher principles, he longed for those finer sensibilities—that delicate perception of a single-hearted benevolence—which discovers and relieves the real sufferings of others.

There was a coarseness and hardness in her very good-nature ; no sympathy, no softness, no mistrust of herself, no fear to wound while she ministered relief.

So it was with what people called her great candour. Lucilla was found almost invariably the defender of whomever, or whatsoever, was censured or condemned by others. People called it her candour, and so she called it herself ; but it was a candour without discrimination, and founded on no principle. It was sufficient that

she could raise an argument in which she was sure apparently to come off triumphant, to engage her in the defence of any cause.

Apparently to come off triumphant from any debate she is certain to do who breaks through those forms of politeness which others observe, defies the laws of reasoning which others find irresistible, establishes her own assertion as authority indisputable for any fact, her own *ipse dixit* as warrant sufficient for the indisputable justice of any sentiment or opinion — has an abundant flow of words at command, and one of the handsomest faces and persons ever seen.

Who can resist such an accumulation of powers?

Judicious reasoners withdrew in silence from a contest in which the plainest rules of right reasoning were set at defiance; the timid yielded to a force they could not resist; while the injudicious many were convinced by the boldness of her assertions, or overwhelmed by the loudness of her voice, or dazzled by the brightness of her eyes. Many were found base enough to choose to believe that what the rich, powerful, talented, beautiful

Mrs. Chandos—with whom it was every one's interest to stand well—said, must be right.

Mr. Chandos, far too judicious and clear-sighted to be thus deceived, when released from the influence of his fatal passion, had at first attempted to correct what he at once felt to be so unpleasing and wrong.

But his efforts were vain.

Two radical faults lay at the foundation of her character, and seemed to defy every attempt at improvement.

Want of sensibility and want of truth.

The first want, though often very much increased by circumstances, as in this present case of unbroken prosperity, is mostly a defect in nature, to be compensated for, rather than to be amended, by education,—compensated for as far as may be by a careful cultivation of habits of justice and benevolence. But the second defect, in which is the master-spring of character and action, is far more serious and far more hopeless. It is not, however, a defect arising from natural deficiencies, but is rather the result of careless training.

Every human being is born to love truth, every human understanding to respect truth, and yet breach of truth is the great master temptation which besets the child; inattention to fact the great error that impairs the judgment of the man; indifference to truth as truth the great defect that debases the divinity of the reason.

Most children are brought up in the first obvious principle of abhorring a lie. In every nursery, by the rudest instructor, to tell a lie is censured and punished; and yet, even in this the most ordinary view of the great principle, how much of that strenuous, unremitting care do we too often find wanting, which builds up this principle into a habit of the soul—one of those habits not to be broken without a general laceration of the whole character. The principle of honour among men in some degree supplies the want of this sacred habit. A man of honour revolts from the charge of telling a lie to another man. But what is too often his conduct with respect to women—to tradespeople—in his dealings on the turf—in politics? Oh, shame—shame!—where is the sacred, indefeasible regard to truth to be found?

Then, among women — more timid, more inaccurate, less influenced by those considerations of honour which render a lie scandalous because it is a cowardice! Again, among the less educated classes — in commerce, trade, servitude — how large are the numbers of those on whose veracity we cannot implicitly rely!

Nothing but the most careful, assiduous training, I repeat, can, or does preserve unimpaired that principle of veracity which is the very corner-stone of the moral edifice.

But these things are obvious and palpable to all.

It is the want of reverence for truth as truth, rather than any obvious breach of the law of veracity or truth-telling, of which I was thinking when I said that want of truth made it impossible for the faults of Lucilla's character to be corrected.

A want of reverence for truth as truth.

The fault, most commonly the fault of the presumptuous and the puzzle-headed, must be corrected by careful attention. Children, or rather I should say young people, for this matter belongs

to the later training when the reason has begun to develope itself,—young people are not, from the first, I think, sufficiently impressed with the absolute nature of truth—the sacred, the divine nature of truth.

The absolute authority of a disagreeable fact, is what the human mind may be found resisting by every evasion and contrivance in its power. We require to be taught—to be impressed with the idea, that all the evasions in the world will not alter a fact, any more than that to shut our eyes will put out the sun—that what is a *fact* will produce its consequences, and that what is not a *fact* cannot produce consequences—that brambles will not bear figs, because we persist in calling them fig-trees; nor thistles grapes, because we *will* look upon them as vines; and that just and logical reasoning will lead to inevitable conclusions, however we may clamour, and cry, and confound premises, and draw imperfect inferences.

To look things in the face, as it is called, is the *moral* part of this description of truth.

But further, there is a reverence for truth founded upon its sacredness.

All truth is and must be from God, and of God.

Whatever is true must be His; whatever *untrue* be of the anti-God, or adversary.

Actions founded upon the true relations of things—upon *facts*—must lead to good; actions founded upon false views of things, to evil.

Therefore to acquire accurate knowledge before we determine, to inquire before we decide, and not to decide where evidence is doubtful or obscure, is among the higher attributes of that wisdom from above, which is at once best reason and best morality.

But how few do this! What rash decisions—what one-sided notions—what vain and crude assertions—what untested principles surround us!

But I fear I am getting tedious.

And, therefore, I will only slightly enlarge upon reverence for truth in matters of speculation, especially, and most especially, in religious and moral speculation. Yet here what do we find? Who has a single-hearted desire for truth?—how

few ! How few that do not the rather reverence their opinion—that “ idol of the case,”—and bowing down before it, forget their high allegiance to truth as truth, and thus violate their obligations to Him in whom is truth and light alone.

It is true the propagators of the most pernicious errors have appealed to truth against what they were pleased to call prejudice. The Humes, the Hobbes, the Voltaires of days gone by, and the Strausses, &c. of the days that are ; but it is by the plausible manner in which they have built up arguments upon foundations not proven, or by their rash assertions, and substitution of their own ideas and notions for facts, that they have so misled and confused many honest understandings, and have brought a jealous apprehension even of inquiry after truth upon many sincere minds.

But let not faithful and honest hearts be thus discouraged.

Truth is of God. Inquiry after Truth *must* ultimately lead to God ; and let, therefore, the timid and hesitating soul take comfort, not by at-

tempting to deny or obscure the facts revealed by science, as some, with the best intentions, have endeavoured to do — but by resting in the *certainty*, that apparent *contradictions* can be in the very nature of things but imperfectly disclosed facts, in which the increase of knowledge must finally display the harmonious relations with the divine nature of the living Father. That God will remain true, though every man a liar; and the throne of the Infinite—so we but persevere—be reached by every way. Every way that is founded upon *fact*—upon real science, and the actual laws of things.

I never hazard myself upon these subjects without regret that I have not the lucid, pregnant language which, in few, brief words—like the sharp sword of the Word, piercing bones and marrow—carries conviction at once to the soul; but such power as I have I use as the occasions arise, in the endeavour to comment upon the characters and events of my little histories; as all history, real or fictitious, should, to render it improving, be commented upon.

In my solitary reflections, the infinite importance of truth, under all these different relations, becomes every day more and more apparent ; and in my daily walk, no fault under its various forms meets me more perpetually than the want of a sacred regard to it under one or other of its interminable relations.

I have not yet quite done with my little children.

I must give you a few more exhibitions of *fantoccini* — of this miniature of life. I love, as you know, to trace the formation of my characters to their earliest origin.

Kitty had very little understood what had passed the evening before, but it was with feelings of the utmost compassion that she learned that the little boy Gideon never came to dessert.

All children came down to dessert in those times. It was the grand event of the day, to come down in full dress, and stand among all the gentlemen and ladies, and be talked to, and

have good things given them, which they were not at other times allowed under the strict daily discipline which then regulated the diet of little girls and boys.

Kitty's tender heart was filled with compassion, as I said ; and her generous invention set to work upon the occasion. The child was, in addition to the charms of her innocence and simplicity, a remarkably sagacious, clever, ingenious little thing. Ingenuity, ability, and sagacity, are shewn in miniature in beings of such a size, and exist as really as in their elders ; they are the seeds from which these things develope into future extent and strength.

She had been admitted into Calantha's dressing-room that morning, and had been seeing Gideon take his lesson ; and then she had played with him at horse and carriage, and had been excessively happy all the time ; for Kitty loved play with all her heart, provided people would be gentle with her ; and she got, in general, very little of it, being an only child. Gideon was full of cleverness and invention, and handled her with all the reverential tenderness with which feeling

children handle a little bird, or any thing they think excessively charming and delicate; and Kitty had settled they would go down together to dessert; and that while she sat upon her papa's knee, Gideon should stand by her side. But Gideon said he never went to dessert.

The immensity of the privation, the overwhelming extent of the misfortune, quite darkened the little child's imagination. When she went to her dinner she was observed by her nurse to eat very little — she seemed quite absorbed in thought; but when dinner was over, and she was taken to her room, to have her dear little face and hands washed, the result of her meditations was disclosed in the request—

“ Amy, make me a potet.”

“ What do you want a pocket for, Miss Kitty? A pocket wouldn't look pretty under your white frock.”

“ Oh! but I want a potet to go to dessert. Do, deary Amy.”

And the child began fondling and caressing. It ended, as usual, with,—

“ I'll ask your mamma, Miss Kitty; and if

she'll have no objections, I'm sure I'll make you a pocket, dear."

It was pretty to see the little thing watching her maid at work during the operation of making this pocket, stepping about upon "tipping toes," as she called it, peeping in and out, interrupting her maid twenty times to see if it was done; and when the tiny, rose-coloured bag, hung by rose-coloured riband, was fastened round her little waist, the shout of exulting joy with which the possession was hailed!

The pocket was so pretty, that Amy, proud of her work, suffered the little child to go down to dessert with it.

She came in with the others, made her dear little modest curtsy at the door, with her eyes demurely bent to the ground; and as soon as the ceremony was over, uttering a scream of delight, ran across the floor to where Mr. Chandos sat, calling out, —

"Papa! I've got a potet."

He stooped down and lifted his idol on his lap.

"Have you, Kitty of all Kittys? Let me see it. What an event!"

She was busy opening the strings, and shewing how she could put her hand in and out; and when this was done, she began to lay hold of some dried sweetmeats which lay upon her father's plate, and to stow them, without ceremony, away.

“Hallo!” cried he, “what are you doing, Kitty? You mustn't take things in that way, you know.”

She crowed aloud — that crow of childish triumph and satisfaction; and continued stowing away as fast as her little fingers could go.

“You'll spoil your pretty pocket, Kitty,” said Mrs. Ernest, who sat by.

She looked up at her, and laughed.

“Give me more.”

“Why, you little, unreasonable, greedy thing!” said her father; “I never saw you in such a humour before, Kitty.”

“I want some of those.”

“Almonds and raisins? — No, no; you must not carry away all the dessert in your new pocket. I don't know what to make of you to-day, Kitty.

The dignity of the pocket seems to have quite turned her head," said he to Mrs. Ernest.

"Do, please, papa; some almonds and raisins."

"No, Kitty has had enough."

"I've haven't had *one*."

"No, but you have got more than is good for you there."

Kitty scrambled up as usual when she had a secret to tell her father, and put her little mouth close to his cheek.

How he did love those secrets!

"It's—not—for—my—self."

"What for, then, my darling?" kissing her.

"That — poor — boy."



They sat upon a cushion by the fire in Calantha's room, and ate the dessert thus obtained, together.

There are pictures of our early infancy which remain indelible when all else are forgotten; to his dying hour he never forgot that day, when

he sat upon a cushion by her side, and the little creature in the white frock kept drawing forth her treasures, one after another, from, to him, that exquisitely beautiful rose-coloured pocket, and sharing them, with the most scrupulous regard to justice, between them.

CHAPTER VI.

“ While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind.”

Pope.

TIME rolls on.

We postpone the consideration of difficulties which lie in the distance, and perhaps we are not altogether unwise in so doing ; the present day usually finds work sufficient for itself, and requires our whole attention ; but Time — inexorable Time rolls on, and at length brings us face to face with the inevitable perplexity, and too often before we are prepared to meet it.

The infant had grown to a child — the child to a boy.

A good and docile boy, but a fine, intelligent,

and high-spirited being, requiring discipline and control ;—and what fine healthy boy, of eight years old, is not beginning to grow rather too strong for the discipline and control of a woman's hand ; and more especially when that woman is, as in this case, enfeebled by disease, delicate of nerve, and unfortunately, by the very nature of her complaints, often for a long space of time almost entirely incapacitated. In these cases, Gideon, of necessity, fell entirely into the hands of Mrs. Alice.

To Calantha Gideon was ever found docile, loving, and obedient. Her gentle and judicious rule—so tender, yet so firm and consistent—exercised a corresponding power over his affections. The boy had long learned to love Calantha with intensity, deep rather than demonstrative. Boys of his age are very seldom demonstrative ; they are not caressing, like little girls ; the signs of feeling are slight, though significant, and are only understood by those whose real interest in the heart of the child renders them attentive and watchful.

Calantha, in the cautious step with which this

vigorous and often noisy child would steal into her chamber, unbidden, when she was ill, — the cheerful alacrity with which he flew to perform any little service he was allowed to render, — the large tears that filled his eyes when reproved by her, — the ready obedience to her directions, and docility to her advice, understood the heart she had to do with, and asked no sentimental display. She comprehended him perfectly; under her government he was quiet and happy. Not so when the frequent attacks of illness threw him into the power of worthy Mrs. Alice; that excellent but rigid and one-sided personage had a strange talent for misapprehending children. She loved Gideon, in her way, very much; and he loved her in his; — but in spite of this, as the boy grew older, they were constantly coming into collision — their contentions were not more frequent than loud.

“ My dear,” said Mrs. Mordaunt, coming into her daughter’s room one day, where she lay confined to her sofa, with one of her attacks of illness, “ that boy really becomes a nuisance. Your father, unfortunately, had to come up into this

part of the house about some alterations in the long gallery window, and he was just in time to witness a desperate battle between Gideon and Alice — I wish she would keep her door shut. You know he never has approved of our plan, nor liked the child much ; and now he is greatly displeased. He has just been into my dressing-room to complain to me ; and in short, my love, he bade me come and say from him, ‘ that he will not have his house made a bear-garden of, and be disturbed and disgusted at once by these disgraceful brawls ; and that the boy was quite spoiled with our indulgence.’ These were his words, my love — you know your dear father ; — in short, I am very much distressed what to do.”

“ I am afraid,” said Calantha, changing colour, and looking a good deal hurried — do what she would, her heart would beat faster whenever this topic was introduced ; poor thing ! she had grown quite nervous about it,—“ I am afraid the poor boy does get unmanageable. Alice makes sad complaints of him ; and yet, poor fellow ! I find him as good and docile as a babe when he is with

me; but, unhappily, I can have him so little. What must I do, dear mother? Help me," said she, fixing her soft eyes beseechingly on Mrs. Mordaunt.

"Poor, dear Calantha!" sitting down, taking her hand, and stroking it fondly, "how your dear hand shakes and trembles! This undertaking, my sweet, generous child, has been, as your father feared, too much for you, and has done you more harm than good. I ought never to have consented to it."

"Oh, don't say so—don't say so, mamma! If you knew the good it *has* done me, you would think nothing of these little drawbacks. To have had an object of care and love perpetually with me has been such a source of happiness! Dear mother, your kind intentions have been fully answered upon the whole."

"Upon the whole, my love——"

"Why, my own mother, one could never expect not to have many little difficulties to encounter. Accident brings many; but this present one was certain to come of itself sooner or later. I own I some way hoped it might be

postponed a year or two yet ; but what is to be done now ? and oh ! far more difficult, what is to be done with him when he grows up ? ”

“ Ah, my dear, that is what your father reproaches us with never thinking of.”

Calantha smiled softly and somewhat sadly. She was accustomed to these little injustices upon the part of her father, with whom she never had been a favourite ; and she had made up her mind when she undertook the ungrateful task of doing a good and generous action against the general opinion of the family, and of her father more especially, to bear with patience such little vexations and injustices as the natural pains and penalties attached to her undertaking.

“ Perhaps you will be so good as to tell my father that I have, indeed, as it was my duty to do, thought of these things—considered them most seriously and anxiously ; and if he would only be so kind as to suffer me to consult with him, and give me his opinion——”

Mrs. Mordaunt shook her head.

“ He has from the first declared, my love, that the whole plan was undertaken contrary to his

judgment, and that he would have nothing in the world to do with it."

Distress was visible in Calantha's face.

"Then what *am* I to do, mother?"

"Why, my dear, to tell the truth, it is perhaps not yet too late to retrace our steps. I have, I own to my shame, all along cherished a foolish hope that we should hear something more of the parentage of this boy—that something would turn up—some one appear to claim him. I myself never doubted but that he was of gentle blood, however irregularly, poor fellow! introduced into the world; but you see nothing *has* turned up—no vestige of his relations has been discovered."

"Too true," said Calantha.

"And what can be done? My dear, neither you nor I possess the means to carry out our own wishes, for they are the same, my love; but as we have begun upon this painful subject, let us courageously look the truth in the face as to how the matter stands. Your father's family is large, has been very expensive, and the demands upon him are increasing every day."

Calantha looked down with an air of grave attention, and her mother went on:—

“You see, my love, that though of course none of our married children can make any *claim* upon us beyond the allowances insured to them by their settlements, yet ours is what may be called a *hungry* family. Your father perhaps regrets—and, I am sure, so do I—that we have brought you all up in habits of expense and luxury perhaps beyond our fortune. He is resolved not to commit that error with respect to a mere alien,” she added.

Calantha could make no reply; she could only reflect with a sort of painful surprise upon the money lavished to support all this luxury, and then upon the impossibility of obtaining a very trifling sum to forward a deed of charity.

“You see, my dear Calantha, how it is. Bevis is never satisfied as it is, and says it is impossible to make his allowance do with a family increasing every year. I own his wife has expensive habits, but that is so natural when her husband is heir to so fine an estate as this. As for the Archers—though Emma is very considerate—yet there are

many little things that she would like to have which I cannot quite afford to give her; and she thinks nothing of it, and expects nothing, but that's because she knows I have not the money. As for the Bedingfields, it's a bottomless abyss. Ernest and his wife manage to do with so little, I perfectly wonder how they make ends meet, and long to do more for them; and as for you, my Calantha, your pocket-money is little enough, though I hope nothing is, ever has, or ever will be spared, to make you comfortable."

"Dear, kind mother!" said Calantha, raising the hand she held to her lips.

"Now, my dear child, I only mention these things to shew you how impossible it is for me to do any thing, except upon the very cheapest possible plan, for this poor child, with so many wants and claims upon all sides. The knowledge of our inability to do more — our absolute inability — is often the only answer we have to make, and the only satisfaction we can give, when our assistance would be useful. People are content when they see one *cannot*; and children, so good, reasonable, and affectionate as mine" — (ah, mothers,

mothers, what kind, partial judges you *can* be!) — “would not endure the idea of your father or me denying ourselves any thing for their sakes. But the case would be quite altered if that was done for a stranger which could not be done for them: I am *sure* there would be a general expression of discontent, and I cannot say without reason.”

“If much were wanted — but would much be wanted?”

“Yes, dear Calantha, you have no idea how much; to give the boy an education such as you, or both of us, could have wished, is, it is plain, quite beyond possibility. What is left but to place him at once in that station from which we ought never to have withdrawn him — retrace our steps, resume the original plan, and, when he is of fit age — which he soon will be — to bind him apprentice to some honest tradesman, and put him in the way of getting his living, unless, indeed, you consent to what I believe your father always expected and intended should be his ultimate destination, the making a page of him for yourself at first, and thus rearing him to fill the place of a confidential servant in this house in due time.”

“ Oh, mother, mother ! ”

The idea seemed to stab her to the heart. Until this moment, much as she knew she loved him, she had no idea how dear the child had become — how insensibly she had allowed herself to look upon him as her son, to associate him with her future life, to identify herself with his, to mark every dawning sign of a fine intellect, every demonstration of a high and generous nature, with almost more than a parent's pride and hope !

How, in the long, restless nights of pain and suffering, had plans for his future success and happiness occupied her thoughts !

How, having been allowed, through the indulgence of her mother and the indifference of her father, to rear the child upon the sort of ill-defined system till then pursued, she had flattered herself that, some day or other, she should be permitted to give him such an education as she ardently desired for him — one which would fit him to become a member of one of the liberal professions — of the Church indeed, for such was the real wish of her heart.

The Church has ever opened her gates to receive among her ministers those whose abilities and moral qualities entitle them to that distinction, be their previous condition what it may. She maintains her dignity by selecting and elevating, not by excluding. To one of Calantha's serious views in religion, no vocation exceeds in importance that of labourer in that vineyard — no place in human society is more truly honourable than the sacred dignity of parish priest; and if there were traits in the character of Gideon which did not exactly indicate his fitness for that profession, she did not take much account of them, knowing well how these things alter as the child becomes the man, and believing that he possessed others which seemed eminently adapted to fit him for the life of a country clergyman.

She understood the boy as well as she loved him dearly; she knew he was of that fine susceptibility of nature which, while it renders a character happily alive to every high impression, exposes it peculiarly to all the injuries which may be received from rude or gross associations; and the idea of exposing this sweet,

high-spirited, and imaginative child to the coarser communications inevitable to the condition to which it was proposed to depress him, exposing him to the innumerable moral evils that would thence arise, and digging, as it were, an impassable gulf between him and herself, filled her with anguish the more bitter because she was totally unprepared for such a proposal.

And yet what was she to do? She had no means of her own by which to carry out any other plan. Her allowance—the money she had it in her power to dispose of as she pleased—was small indeed compared with her habits, as is very often the case with young ladies living in a family regulated as was her father's. Her economies from it, however, had sufficed, with some little assistance from her mother, to pay the light expenses at present incident to her charge, but that was all that it would enable her to do. Her mother had, in comparison, almost as little money at her own command to spend as she pleased; and besides, Mrs. Mordaunt had explained herself upon this point by a reference to what she considered the claims of her other

children. Money was spent abundantly upon herself, it was true : her father was liberal,—nay, lavish in affording the means of supplying every assistance, comfort, or attention, which her circumstances demanded ; but if an economy could be made in these things, the benefit of it would never reach her ; it would return to her father's purse, to be spent in some other indulgence for some other member of the family.

She felt all the miserable helplessness of her situation—a situation which, by the way, I will remark is often a cause of much, I will not say *unhappiness*—that may be too strong an expression—but of much *privation* of happiness in families.

I think parents often do not reflect upon the painful state of dependence in which their unmarried daughters, after they have passed a certain age, and attained to full womanhood several years, often find themselves in their father's house : I say to *full* womanhood—I mean several years of womanhood. Till that advance in age such dependence is wholesome, proper, and natural—consequently no evil to the party con-

cerned ; but *after* a certain age, women, educated as women now are, begin to desire a more extended field than the mere following in the wake of their parents will afford. They have, or they ought to have, their own views and opinions upon general matters, and should take their share in the great interests of the moving world without them ; but they are denied the means of exercising any influence, or forwarding any plans, by the system pursued in their monied concerns.

An allowance for their clothes is all they receive.

Their married sisters carry away their portions, and are launched at once into that life of plans, and schemes, and interests, which to an active spirit is the very element of happiness ; whilst those who remain at home—without those charming interests, those sweetest affections that temper the cares attendant upon husband and children,—pass their time, probably, in tending declining age—a long and arduous task—but far less animating than the more genial employment of guarding the young and opening being ; and those very women, thus devoted to duties often so

monotonous and often so painful, yet almost always performed by these excellent creatures in a manner so exemplary, are deprived, not from insensibility to their happiness upon the part of the parents, but from the mere habit of going on in this way, and want of attention to the changes which time effects in the relations of things, of the exercise of that power of free action which the possession of a little more money would command, and which free action would so greatly increase the enjoyment of their lives.

I am not pleading for a larger *share* of the family indulgences, but only for the increased power of giving the disposition of such indulgences as regards themselves. The money a man can afford to lay out upon any daughter arrived at this stage of womanhood, let him as much as possible contrive she shall have the power to lay out herself in the way best pleasing to herself. How happy it would have made Calantha, had she been allowed to dispense herself the sum yearly expended upon her, and thus be enabled in some degree to realise the numerous plans for benefiting others, which, unfortunately, were

for all parties but building castles in the air now.

“Oh, mother! mother!”

The look of dismay and anguish with which this was said shot to the kind, good mother’s heart.

“I did not think you cared about him so much.”

“Oh, mamma! you do not know that child. No one but myself knows him, it is now so long that he has lived, as it were, alone with me. I know him well; you have no idea what a being he is!”

“Oh, my dear, every body thinks the same of the child they look upon as their own!”

“I can only compare with what I myself was—what I remember the rest of us at that age were. I don’t think we were either selfish or stupid children,—but such a difference; he has the noblest, bravest spirit, has that child,—such a love of truth—such a reverence for the name of God—such a loving, grateful heart—such a delicate sense of right and wrong—and such aptness! A mind which expands to a touch. Such a love of knowledge—such a delight in

improvement; and he is but a child of eight years old! It is wonderful!—and oh, mamma! mamma! to send him to the servants' hall, or bind him apprentice to some coarse, ordinary man—don't think me proud, mother, but what if Ernest ——”

“Ernest is rather different I *should* think, Calantha ——”

“Oh, yes! Poor Gideon, I know he has no pretensions—he has only the claims which something most precious and beautiful has to be preserved from the coarser uses of this world—that the Portland Vase has not to be made a beer-jug.”

“How you do let your imagination run away with you, Calantha!”

She felt the reproof to be unjust. It was the first time in her life that she had thought her mother unjust. She stopped, for she had been running on in an excited manner, unchecked by any fear of her mother misunderstanding her. She coloured and was silent.

The fact was, that Mrs. Mordaunt was so sorry and perplexed herself that she had a little lost her temper.

“I can’t suppose,” she went on, “that the boy is such a prodigy as you fancy. One never meets with prodigies nowadays; but he’s a very fine, handsome child, I own; however, what else in the name of goodness can we do with him?”

Calantha shook her head, but said nothing.

“I have not hurt you, my Calantha?” said the dear, good mother, taking her hand tenderly and anxiously.

“Hurt me!—you, mother! Oh, no! oh, no!—but indeed it is not my fancy that runs away with me—oh, let me persuade you of that! I could almost wish I were not so very, very sure of the value of this incomparable child!

“If I were not so sure of this,” she went on, after again kissing her mother’s hand most affectionately, “I would not be so obstinately bent upon resisting what I know—I know in such a creature, must be inevitable ruin—would kill the heart, even if it spared the soul!”

“Alas, my love! how shall I ever get your father to enter into all these fine distinctions?”

But Calantha knew very well what she meant. She was making no fine, unfounded distinctions;

she knew well the high sense of honour—the enthusiasm after all that was good or great—the irresistible propensity to rise of that young spirit; and that to weigh him down, to degrade him to a lower rank with all its associations than that to which he had been accustomed, would be to coop the young eaglet in a chicken-pen—to fetter the lithe panther of the woods in a dog-kennel.

Such creatures die or become stupid thus forced out of their native sphere; and she felt certain, whatever else the consequence, that the heart of the child—that spirit within which we name heart—that spirit which animates and vivifies the man, would be killed in him. Then, with a just and rapid glance, she anticipated the dreadful consequences which this sort of degeneration exercises upon the character. Degeneration is to all unhappiness,—*il y a dans la dégradation un malheur sourde dont l'on ne se rend pas conte*—the words of Madame de Staël had often been in her head; but it was not misery she dreaded for him, it was far worse. Ardent spirits like his had by such perversion been driven into

wildness; and she shuddered at the almost certainty she felt that of such spirits was Gideon.

“ Tel brille au premier rang qui s'éclipse au second.”

Admirable and profound observation !

I have heard it quoted —

“ Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au premier.”

As if there was any thing worth preserving in that sentiment—it is what every body would say—it is the common course of things. But the sentiment in the first line is equally just and pregnant.

She must save him from this at any risk, at the cost of any exertion. She reflected some little time, then she spoke again.

“ Mother,” she said, seriously, “ believe me, I have the strongest reasons for urging what I am about to say. You and my father were so kind as to allow me to take charge of this child. I never would—I never could have dared to undertake it, had I not believed that you and my father intended to allow me to direct his plan of life,—so far as I was able, at least,—and to

have the power of a negative upon any other which might be proposed if I could not carry my own into execution. I now put that negative upon either of these plans ; Gideon must be neither a handicraftsman nor a menial servant. I do not know what I can do, but something else I will and must do for him."

"Do you mean me to tell your father this? I am afraid it will displease him very much; but I am sure he will do nothing without your consent and approbation."

"But what does she mean to do with him? To be sure, my dear, I shall not *force* her inclinations. You tell me—and you know her better than I do—that the anxiety and distress she would suffer would do her more harm in one month than this absurd indulgence has done her good in four years. I was bewitched to listen to either of you. I felt at the time that such things only expose one to inextricable perplexities and difficulties. If we had sent the

child down-stairs at once, or, much better, put him out at some farm-house, he would have grown up naturally in the only place proper for him to occupy, and I should have been spared all this disagreeable nonsense. It's a very disagreeable thing, Mrs. Mordaunt, to be urged to act a second time against my own judgment; but I feel that in Calantha's state of health there is, as you say, some excuse for it. Well, well, I agree with you; the best thing to be done will be to send him to Mr. Singletrees' school. It's one of those *mezzo termine* which I hate, shifting off the difficulty of to-day upon the shoulders of to-morrow; but I see no alternative—nothing better to be done at present."

"My dear Mr. Mordaunt, I have ever found you the kindest and most indulgent of husbands and of fathers!"

"Are you pleased, Caroline?"

"Greatly pleased and deeply grateful; for nothing, you know, delights a woman," said she, smilingly, "like persuading a sensible man against his better judgment."

She had better not have said that.

Mr. Mordaunt felt ashamed to have yielded even to his beautiful wife; but her serene, good temper, calm good sense, and *domestic* dignity and beauty, exercised an influence over him which all the violence of the cleverest or most aspiring scold in the world would have failed to attain.

She very rarely said what was out of place, for she had that fine perception of proprieties which we call tact.

He walked, however, away, and the only mischief that ensued from the speech was, that he disliked the poor, unoffending cause of this slight mortification more than ever.

CHAPTER VII.

“ This little vault—this narrow room,
Of love and beauty is the tomb :
The dawning beam, that 'gan to cheer
Our clouded sky, lies darkened here.”

BEN JONSON.

THE point gained was no inconsiderable one, though Mr. Singletrees' school was any thing but a choice seminary for the education of youth. It was a common country school, in a village at no great distance from Mordaunt Hall, and frequented by the children of the superior class of farmers and the more wealthy tradesmen in the neighbourhood. Of Mr. Singletrees' qualifications as a tutor little was known to Calantha, and no satisfactory inquiry could she make ; it was sufficient that he lay near at hand, and that

to send Gideon to him was a solution of the present difficulty, at least.

His going would relieve her father from the constant irritation which his presence in the house excited, and his education would at least be going forward in the ordinary way. Whatever the school might prove, he must reap one plain advantage by being sent there, that of being brought up like the other boys about him, whilst exposed to no worse associations, or to greater disadvantages, than others. With these reflections she must content herself. A special education she had the good sense to perceive it was impossible to hope for, and therefore vain to attempt. She must confine her efforts to obviating the evils that might arise from new circumstances, and must herself endeavour to give that higher education of the heart and character which she felt could alone prepare a boy like this to encounter and subdue the evils and difficulties that lay before and around him.

She little knew,—happily or unhappily as that may be,—like many an anxious mother, she little divined, to what a young child is exposed

sent thus early to the large, heterogeneous society of boys brought together in an ordinary school. Yet it was with an earnestness amounting to solemnity that, as she lay in her bed of pain, she stretched out those loving arms, and as she held him folded in them, her earnest yet most gentle eyes bent upon his face, exhorted him, in terms which, child as he was, he most thoroughly understood, to be faithful and true to his principles of piety and duty in this new world upon which he was about to enter.

The white curtains falling round the alcove, the unsullied delicacy of the trimmed sheets and pillows among which she lay, the soft countenance, all shrouded with the lace of her cap, the delicate arms stretched out to enfold him, and that angel face of beaming love and gentle earnestness, filled the little boy's heart with a tender awe. He looked upon her as a child regards the picture of an angel, with love and admiration mingled. He felt as if he could not speak, and he did not; but he suddenly dropped down upon his knees and kissed her hand.

But now Mrs. Alice came in, and it was time

to set out. He was all the child again, and, to tell the truth, anxious to be gone.

It was the opening of a fine spring day, when the little boy, with "cheerful morning face," and his heart swelling with the anticipated delight of being a school-boy, set forward with his friend Alice to thread the tangled wood-walks, on his way to the coach which was to convey him to school.

The dew lay sparkling upon the grass; the sun, but lately risen, was glittering upon the bespangled herbs and trees; the flowers were spreading forth their petals to the air; the woods were all alive with sound. The stock-dove was cooing in the oak, the blackbird whistling from the brake, the cuckoo calling, and the cocks in the distant farm-yards crowing.

And the little fellow, his cheek yet warm with Calantha's parting kiss, his little head and heart full of her parting words, walked on prattling as he went, and holding Alice by the hand.

"Yes, I will be a *very* good boy, Alice," had expressed the earnest purpose uppermost in his young heart.

"That you must, Gideon, or you'll break Miss Calantha's heart, and make me very sorry too."

"I'm never to go into a passion; and I'm to do all my master bids me, and work very hard at my lessons, and tell the truth and fear God," said the child, "and so I feel I *can* and I *will*; I will do any thing for Miss Calantha—and sometimes, Alice, do you know, I think I shall be a great knight; and when I am, I'll give her everything in the world she likes—and I'll give you a new gown, Alice."

"Thank you, my dear, much obliged to you; but you must fear God as well as please Miss Calantha."

"I shall do my very best to fear Him, and I thank Him very much for making all these beautiful things: how beautiful it is in this wood, Alice! and did God make all?" casting his eyes first at the sky, and then around him, where the tufted trees gently waved in the morning sun.

“To be sure, child—doesn’t your Bible tell you so, and Miss Calantha, too?”

“Yes, I know—but there’s such a great, great many—how wonderful!”

“You strange boy! you don’t mean to say He didn’t make all these things?”

“They are *so* beautiful! Oh this wood is so beautiful! Look, Alice, at the mountain-ash in flower; see how pretty it looks—and what’s this sweet, sweet, little tree? It’s got a pink blossom.”

“Why, that’s a bilberry, child; did you never see a bilberry blossom before?”

“I never went so far as this before—you take this branch home to Miss Calantha—will you?—and my love to her; and I’ll remember all she said, and be a very, very good boy.”

And so, with springy step, exulting, honest heart, filled with good purpose and with grateful love, he passed through these beautiful woods of Eden, inhaling delight and rapture at every step, and then he entered the real world.

The house in which Mr. Singletrees carried on his scholastic occupations was a large, staring brick house at the end of a pretty considerable village, composed of one principal street, and presenting the usual variety of the butchers, bakers, and small grocers' shops. A church at one end, with a somewhat neglected churchyard round it, for it was a non-resident parish, served by a clergyman who at that time was allowed to hold two other benefices, and who, the stipend of this vicarage being very small, did not imagine himself obliged to keep even a curate here.

No village can escape a certain air of the picturesque and the poetic, let it be where it may, or what it will; but this had very little of either, being situated indeed in a country full of natural beauty, but somehow being singularly devoid of any itself. It was surrounded by fields and hedges, and the rough and uncultivated plots of ground that belonged to the inhabitants of the several houses were for the most part surrounded with broken hedges and filthy ditches full of stagnant water.

Ill-dressed, dirty children played in the streets; slovenly, dirty women appeared at the house-doors; and the shuttle was heard going in many of these houses—for there was a little riband-weaving carried on in the place. The women, too, had some business, as straw-plaiters and lace-makers; but there was no appearance of comfort in their dwellings, for there was little of thought or industry in their habits. Where Christian and moral discipline is wanting, it will, I believe, be found that the mere power of earning a little more money will not contribute even to the physical well-being of the community.

The Wesleyan chapel at the outskirts of the village did not seem in this place to have in any degree compensated for the neglect upon the part of the church; there seemed, in fact, as little seriousness among the people in their dissent from, as in their adherence to, the church of their fathers. There was no resident squire near enough to exercise any good influence; indeed, at the period of which I am writing, much less of that sort of good influence now

so generally extending from the rich to the poor, existed, than at present. There was, in general, very, very much less attention to their duties upon the part of either squire or religious minister, anywhere—than now is to be found, I am proud to say, almost everywhere.

Mr. Singletrees had, in fact, placed his establishment here, because the squire being dead, and his estate in chancery, the large, staring red house at the end of the village was to be had for a very small sum.

Quick beat the heart of our little friend as he approached the awful precincts, and looked up with mingled admiration and disappointment at the staring, and very prosaic red front before him. There it stood with a walled court before, and a walled play-ground behind; not a tree or a shrub was near. The fields ran off on either side, surrounded by close, thick hedges, and waving with green corn; but the sweet life of the woods, the sweet sounds and smells, the beauteous, varying forms to which his little heart had been accustomed,—

“ Their colours and their forms, which were to him
An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm ;”——

Where were they ?

He looked backwards down the little street of the village, where a pack of dirty, rough-looking boys were scouring about at a loud and noisy play ; and upwards at the staring red-brick house, with its tall, narrow windows, and stone ornamented front ; and then at the iron gates which shut in the paved court.

And he crept a little closer to Alice. Yet his little heart, though it began to beat fast, was, after all, filled with a not unpleasing sensation of wonder and expectation when the bell rang loud, and presently a dirty-looking man-servant, drawing down his coat-sleeves, appeared.

“ Is Mr. Singletrees at home ? This is a letter for him from Miss Mordaunt ; this young gentleman is coming to school.”

“ Oh, very well ; master expected him. Follow me, young gentleman.”

There was no kind, anxious mother or father

attending to give the little boy confidence or consequence; the good old servant, however, did all that could be done by her.

She looked about her with a keen, observing eye, drew up a little at the dirty servant, but did not seem ill-pleased at the appearance of the front-court, which was flagged and clean, and kept, as usual at schools, in company order.

The man went round, opened the front-door, and ushered them into Mr. Singletrees' sitting-room; there to wait that great dignitary's leisure.

He was now at breakfast; and the boys, let out for an hour to breakfast and play, were making a loud noise in the play-ground beyond. Little Gideon listened with much interest to the sound as there he sat demure upon one of the chairs, gazing around him, struck with the silent solemnity of the place he was in, as well as with the sounds of riotous hilarity which proceeded from without.

At last the door opened, and Mr. Singletrees made his appearance.

A large, rough, red-faced, coarse-looking man he was.

Large, red-faced, coarse-looking men I have seen, whose outer seeming could not, with all its coarseness, disguise the sweet, benign influences, or the sublime intelligence that beamed from within—and who can behold this and not adore the plastic power of the Spirit, which thus can transmute and refine the rudest and roughest materials?

But every thing of this kind was wanting here. Mr. Singletrees was as little fitted for the part he had undertaken as a man could possibly be—unless so far as his stentorian voice and powerful arm might be advantageous in preserving order throughout a community which he never dreamed of disciplining by any means but those of pure brute force.

His ideas of intellectual cultivation were pretty much upon a par with those of his upon moral training. To drive a certain quantity of Latin and Greek into a boy by reiterated calls upon one faculty alone, and that the lowest—the animal memory; to give a certain aptness at

working problems in arithmetic or geometry, by a mere kind of mechanical facility of the intellect, without the slightest attempt at awakening the reason, or reaching in a certain sense the comprehension. Such were his aims.

He had not even a conception of anything beyond; he was not capable of it.

His pupils detested their books. Who would not feel the utmost disgust at any mental operations thus conducted, be he boy or be he man? Men are apt to forget that the reason why the operations, which are so utterly hateful to the child, become in time so interesting and engaging to themselves, is, not that the child is less capable of intellectual enjoyment, less capable of being incited to labour by other influences than those of mere physical pleasure or pain; but that the fact is, as most children are taught, they cannot enjoy the slightest intellectual pleasure of any kind. The drudgery of learning is not rewarded by the delight of comprehension; by that sense of extension of the intellectual view, which is, perhaps, almost the highest and purest pleasure of which our nature is capable; the

delicate constructions of that grammar at which he toils in sordid distress from day to day; the beautiful *rationale* of those abstract problems which are to him but dry, unintelligible signs,—obscure laws by which he blindly works out results of which he neither understands the causes nor consequences,—are lost altogether to the child labouring in our ordinary schools.

That he was to be flogged into learning can surprise no one.

That in nine cases out of ten he should leave school with that rooted abhorrence to literature too common among our youths, can astonish no one.

The only cause for astonishment is that from such imperfect forms of discipline great and clever men undoubtedly, every day are cast forth; whether it be that by digestion so powerful even such crude nourishment can be retained and assimilated; or that from the original force and clearness of their faculties, they are able to penetrate that which is an inextricable confusion to others; or, is it that there is some advantage in this forced labour

of the spirit after all, which strengthens the powers by the very strength of the contest, thus waged against inclination ?

It is a subject too long and too interesting to be more than touched upon.

But as I am upon it, may I venture upon a remark ?

The teaching children in play, as was attempted to be done some half century ago, when I was a child, is false and delusive in every way. It is delusive, for it deviates from the grand truth which lies at the foundation of the conditions of human life, that nothing valuable can be obtained without labour ; which truth ought to be the one grand aim of education to inculcate and render habitual to the child. False, because it attempts to substitute an artificial stimulus and an artificial reward for the legitimate stimulus and reward of industry and assiduity.

The child learns, and ought to be taught that he learns, because it is a duty required of him from those to whom obedience is due ; but is he not, by the methods pursued, too often defrauded

of the legitimate reward of the performance of his duty—the expansion of his thoughts, from want of a due comprehension of what he is about?

But I have left the little boy I love sitting there in his chair, looking up at the red face, black hair and whiskers, stern black eyes, great broad shoulders, and heavy limbs, of the formidable Mr. Singletrees, with a mixture of terror and aversion.

“Sorry to have kept you waiting, ma’am. Thank you,” taking Calantha’s letter, and going to the window to read it.

“Every attention shall be paid to Miss Mordaunt’s requests. Stand up, my boy—don’t be afraid of me—I’m only a terror to bad boys. Miss Mordaunt’s letter gives a very good character of you; I hope you will continue to deserve it. What’s the young gentleman’s name, ma’am,” addressing Alice, “for Miss Mordaunt has quite forgotten to mention it?”

By a strange inadvertency Calantha, who never had occasion to call him by any other name than Gideon, which was the only one ever used in the family, had given him no surname in her note.

During the whole previous negotiation she had spoken of him as a child in whose welfare she was much interested, but had named him no further; in her present note she called him Gideon, as usual.

It was Alice who had told the child to call himself Mr. Nones' when asked whose child he was; it had been her simple invention for getting out of a difficulty without infringing upon her strict respect for truth.

"What is the young gentleman's name?" said Mr. Singletrees, "for Miss Mordaunt only calls him Gideon. A relation of the family, of course? Is his name Mordaunt?—or—there are several daughters of Mr. Mordaunt's married, I understand,—one of their children, perhaps? What surname, ma'am, must I enter him by?"

Alice hesitated, and Mr. Singletrees looked surprised.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, his surname if you please? We, of course, designate boys by their surnames in seminaries of the extent of mine. I may have fifty Johns or Toms in the house at once. Mordaunt? Archer?"

“ No, no, sir ; Nones,—Gideon Nones.”

“ Nones!—Do I understand you rightly, ma’am. A curious name enough, to be sure ;” and Mr. Singletrees laughed a little. He knew Mrs. Alice to be only a poor servant, so he was quite at his ease in her presence. “ Nones!—well, I never heard such a name before. What country name can it be ? Where do his parents live, ma’am, if it’s not impertinent ? ”

“ I don’t know what business that is of anybody’s,” said Mrs. Alice, tartly.

“ Why, as to that, ma’am, as I suppose I am to consider Mr. Mordaunt as reckoning himself answerable for the expenses of his education, strictly speaking it may be, as you say, no affair of mine whence this young gentleman sprang, but a natural curiosity arises when one hears so singular a name. Gideon Nones ! Come here, little boy, have you ever been at school before ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Then who has taught you your lessons ; I suppose you can read and write ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Of course,” said Mrs. Alice, disdainfully ;

“ Miss Calantha and I have taken care of that. I doubt whether many young gentlemen of his age know as much, or read their Bible so well, as Master Gideon.”

“ A nephew of Miss Mordaunt’s, of course?” persisted Mr. Singletrees.

“ No, sir.”

Mr. Singletrees smote his forehead with his hand ; a sudden thought seemed to strike him.

“ Oh!—I have heard something. I had forgotten all about it. A child that Miss Mordaunt had taken up—found at the door—a coroner’s inquest—drowning——”

“ Hush, sir!” said Alice, authoritatively, looking at the child, whose eyes, extended with wonder, were fixed on Mr. Singletrees, and whose face was becoming now red, now pale, now red again, and now paler than ever.

“ Never mind, Gideon,” said Alice, turning kindly to the child ; “ don’t think about any thing we have been saying, it’s all nonsense ; tell anybody that asks you that your Mr. Nones’ child, and that you live at Mr. Mordaunt’s — that’s answer enough for all the world, I should

think," added Alice, haughtily, for her idea of the dignity of belonging to Mr. Mordaunt's family was limitless.

Mr. Singletrees said no more.

He pursed up his mouth, and endeavoured no further to penetrate the mystery, putting the worst possible interpretation upon the whole story; but what mattered it to him?—he was sure to get paid.

He did, however, feel a considerable diminution in the pride and gratification with which he had received the intimation that a child from Mordaunt Hall was to become a member of his establishment. The satisfaction with which the intelligence had been received was exchanged for a feeling amounting to something very like mortification. He well, and exactly, knew the number of boys entitled to bear the names of Mordaunt, Archer, or Bedingfield, not one of these had been intrusted to his care; but this unknown, nameless fondling, his school seemed to be thought good enough for. Mr. Singletrees looked upon it something in the light of an insult.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Mordaunt he now recollected had honoured him with a call, or even a note upon the occasion. Miss Mordaunt had written, it is true, but what was that? Of course, she took upon herself the necessary communications relative to this object of her *charity*. She had sent him over by her woman servant; there was not even a horse and man-servant parading up the village to give him consequence. He looked at the boy again with something between contempt and dislike, and then at Mrs. Alice, and said, with a good deal of irritation,—

“In a seminary so long established and so respectable as this, we are not accustomed to deal with these sorts of mysteries—I don’t know whether I ought not to hesitate,—”

“I’ll tell you what, Mr. Singletrees,” said Alice, getting up, and now thoroughly angry, taking the child’s hand, “if you say another word about it, Gideon and I will go back to Mordaunt Hall whence we came. There’s other schools to be found in the world beside yours, I’ll be bound.”

Gideon seized fast hold of her hand as anxious

now to be gone as he had been to come ; all the visions of schoolboy happiness had vanished like a dream—the stern, cold, disagreeable aspect of reality was staring him in the face.

“ Come away, Alice—come away—let us go home.”

“ Not so fast,—not so fast, little master. Really, ma’am, I beg your pardon. I did not intend any offence. I shall be most happy to oblige Miss Mordaunt or any member of Mr. Mordaunt’s family. Will you like to see the young gentleman’s bed-room?”

Poor child, what rapid, tormenting alternations of hope and fear ! One moment he had thought himself restored to liberty, and in his woods again—the next ! —He looked imploringly at Alice, but she only said,—

“ Very well, sir, if you mean that as an apology, I’m satisfied. Yes, I’ll look at the accommodations, if you please.”

And without further attention to the poor child just elevated to hope, and now plunged into silent despair, she arose and followed the master. Gideon, uncertain what he ought to

do, creeping up the wide echoing staircase after her.

Mrs. Alice was not a hard-hearted,—indeed, in the common sense, she was a kind-natured woman.

But had this been her own child how differently she would have felt!—Nature—I should say the Omnipotent Author of all things, has provided in defence of the tender child that well-spring of instinctive love which dwells in the mother's breast, flowing perhaps the strongest, where it is the most called for, among those of otherwise low, moral culture. Had it been her own little boy, how anxious—how over anxious would she have been! how impatient of his slightest pain! how susceptible—even weakly susceptible to the suffering now painted on his fallen countenance! Mothers feel these things quite differently from other people, they feel them *selfishly*. The most heroic act of virtue which almost any mother can perform is the infliction of pain upon her child,—the anguish of the first separation is more than shared by the mother's answering heart.

But none of all this was there upon the part of Alice for poor Gideon. She would not have suffered him to be ill-treated, and she was sorry for him when under obvious pain or misfortune, but going to school was a matter of course; he had been quite content to go that morning, and she, in truth, was not at all sorry to get rid of him. She wanted that intense interest in the child's welfare which would have led her to remark the slow, desponding step, the fallen countenance, the heart big with tears, which he was mastering as he could, as, poor child! he followed her, and his already dreaded master, up and down the house.

To the large room for twenty beds, in which he was to sleep,—to the wash-house, where one pump and half-a-dozen basins were provided for fifty boys,—up and down, and here and there.

At last Alice took leave.

Young as he was, the child had resolution enough to keep back his tears. If she had no true mother's yearning for him, neither had he a true child's love for her. They were not tears of affection that were springing to his eyes, rather

those of vague apprehension and of intense disappointment at being left there after all. . These he mastered, shook Alice by the hand, and then followed his master into the school-room.

Here the boys were already assembled, making a tremendous noise, drumming with their heels, and rattling with their slates upon their desks. One unlucky urchin had invaded the master's chair, and was holding forth in mock heroic to his companions; but the moment the door opened there was a dead silence.

Jealous of respect, the master approached the unhappy culprit now escaping swiftly from the chair, gave him a thundering box upon the ear as he was sliding into his seat, and then assumed his place.

"Go and sit there, Gideon Nones," said he, pointing to the lowest place in the school, "till I have examined you, and know where to place you.—First Class!"

To his place the little boy crept.

As he went down the whole length of the school, looking shy but not daunted, some thrust out their feet as if to throw him down, others put

their tongues in their cheeks, and leered at him. Not one said or did a kind or encouraging thing. The brutality of the master gave the tone to the school. But he was a dauntless little fellow, a hero in his way, and resolved, if he died in the effort, not to disgrace himself and behave like a baby. So he made his way steadily onwards, and sitting down in the place assigned to him, began to watch with a beating heart all that was going on.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ But as the slightest sketch, if justly trac’d,
Is by ill-colouring but the more disgrac’d;
So by false learning is good sense defac’d :
Some are bewilder’d in the maze of schools.” . . .

POPE.

It is one of the difficulties which possess the anxious mind, striving to give a little boy the best education in its power—to reconcile the desire of obtaining more excellent results than ordinary, by an education in some degree special, with the necessity of preparing the child for the system of routine adopted, perhaps unavoidably, in the common run of schools.

The child who has been accustomed to proceed from thought to thought, from principle to principle, to understand what he is about as he goes on, to see the object proposed distinctly before

him, and to be enlivened and excited by subjects level with his capacity, and treated so as to excite his fancy and imagination—is lost, as it were, in the wilderness of strange words, conveying no ideas to his mind, with which, upon entering a school, he finds himself at first surrounded.

The whole habit of his mind was to be broken up, and for the powers of reason and imagination, which had before stimulated his attention and expanded his ideas, one sole faculty is substituted, that of learning words—words to him, *mere* words—by rote.

The system pursued is, I know, defended by those more experienced than I am. They urge that what is lodged in the memory will be found when the intellect is matured; but I think this may be doubted, and at all events the cost at which the acquisition is made is great.

Many have pitied Milton's daughters reading to their blind but exalted father pages of those classics which they did not comprehend—though to most daughters, and for such a father, one should think that piety would have sweetened the task and rendered it grateful, nay delightful;—

but who pities the poor little boys, toiling from day to day, and year to year, among words as barren in ideas to them? How odious, because how barren, because how incomprehensible to the child, are those abstract studies, such as grammatical constructions, the higher branches of arithmetic, geometry, and all such as address themselves to the pure reason alone, until the faculty is developed (which does not take place till childhood is about to merge into youth), and then how great a change comes over the mind. It is as if a veil were lifted, daylight admitted, and the fine connexions of logic, grammar, numbers, forms, are disclosed, and excite a sense of beauty, and inspire an interest beyond what can be attained by the finest works of art.

We daily find occasion to lament the indisposition of numbers of our young men for reading, and, indeed, for any form of intellectual improvement,—but as it seems impossible that the mind should not take pleasure in the reception of new ideas, for every child that ever was born takes pleasure in stories which it understands — may

not the system I have alluded to in some degree lie at the root of this defect, by reason of which books are associated with the recollection of years of that dry, barren labour from which no mental developement whatever has arisen?

Books are hated, because they it is which have kept the boy in a dingy school-room, engaged in the arid task when youth and nature were shouting for him to come away and enjoy her air and fresh fields, healthy excitement, and strenuous bodily effort—justly hated, if, while they confine and stunt the energies of the body, they afford no food for the imperishable mind.

To return to our poor, little, anxious, sensitive, observing boy, sitting there at the bottom of the school, in his dress of sober hue and simple texture, his two little hands upon his knees, his little head bent forward in earnest attention, taking in what passed, as the saying is, with all his eyes.

The dreadful voice of the master sounded now and then like thunder in his ears, and his young blood curdled with a sensation approaching to

horror as from time to time a heavy box on the ear, or the slashing cane, was heard through the school-room.

At last he was himself called up.

He came, poor little boy! his mind a perfect storehouse of knowledge suited to his years. Calantha, left to the unassisted suggestions of her own understanding, had acted upon the plan faintly alluded to in the opening of this chapter. She had endeavoured to give the little boy what she thought to be sound instruction, such as his capacity was fitted to receive and to comprehend. She had purposely avoided what is called learning by rote, and that faculty had not been exercised at all.

This was doubtless a mistake; all the faculties have their purpose and should be exercised, and to have learned good verses by heart, even though above his comprehension at the time, and the rudiments of his Latin grammar, would have been useful for this purpose, without interfering improperly with the first principles upon which she had proceeded in his education.

Such mistakes all who deviate from the beaten

track are certain to fall into. There was not ever a *special* education, I think, in which such may not be detected; but, after all, those thus carefully and specially educated, as far as I have observed, turn out no common men.

However, for better or for worse, as it might prove in future, this child, accustomed to look for a meaning in all that he was taught, and to exercise his memory through his understanding, was soon at a loss.

Even his beautiful and fluent English reading was at fault. Set to read such sentences as those in the books at that period which were devoted to the instruction even of these early classes—mere dry abstracts of history or science conveyed through the medium of long, cumbersome words, derived from the Greek or Latin languages, to the exclusion of our simple, racy Saxon, which the writers of that day thought so grand.

“Mind what you’re about, sir!” cried the stentorian voice of the master. “Eight years old, and cannot read your own language,” as the boy blundered over some word of six syllables, whose meaning, as well as that of the whole sentence,

not to say page, of similar eloquence, was completely lost to him.

The child floundered and hesitated — stopped and looked up.

“ Spell it, sir ! ” shouted the master.

Now Calantha, unluckily again, was accustomed never to stop the child when engaged in reading, in order to make him spell a long and difficult word. She thought that it diverted attention from what was more important — the *matter* upon which the child was engaged.

The boy, confused and at a loss, still hesitated ; he seemed not to know what was required of him.

The master was not in the habit of troubling himself with making inquiry after the cause of any of his commands not being on the instant obeyed. He had, moreover, indulged himself in the frightful habit of yielding daily to the peculiar temptations incident to his calling, till their repeated recurrence had worked a woeful effect upon his mind — irritation and impatience had become brutality and passion.

“ Do as I bid you this instant, sir, or I’ll throw this book at your head ! ”

And before there was time for obedience, the book was levelled, and the child struck to the floor.

He would not cry. He had been taught that first element of fortitude in a child—that small exercise of self-command, which is the seed of future strength and heroism.

He did not utter a complaint; but he got up again from the floor, stunned and more confused than ever—too much confused indeed to feel that proud revolt against injustice, which would have been natural to him under other circumstances, and which might have been manifested by an air of sulky defiance and obstinacy.

But it was neither defiance nor obstinacy now; it was simply the confusion of brain occasioned by a treatment so new, and by the effects of a blow, the first he had ever received, and that upon the head, which rendered him still more incapable than before of obeying his master.

“Spell the word, you young rascal, or I’ll teach you!” roared Mr. Singletrees, now quite beside himself with passion.

“Con-ca-te-na-tion. Spell it, or”—with an oath—“I’ll knock you down again!”

The child no longer knew what was said or done; the room seemed to swim about him; his stupid look up into his master’s face was answered by a box upon the ear which might have felled an ox, and under which he fell insensible to the ground.

“Lift him up, Reynolds,” said the master to a big, ill-looking boy, who acted as monitor to the younger classes. “He’s only shamming; carry him to bed, and give him bread and water till he learns to *stand* a box on the ear.”

Such was the first introduction of this susceptible, high-spirited, but most good and docile child, of this heart of feeling—of this imagination all filled with the sweetest images, to that which *should* have been the Pierian spring—a fountain of celestial nourishment to an ardent, thirsting soul.

His misery you may imagine. I am not going to grieve you by any further description of it.

The utter desolation of mind,—the absence of thought and idea,—the stupid inaptness which succeeded to a few days of such treatment, was lamentable. In vain the poor little boy, confused in all his notions, anxious to be good, and learn his lessons for Miss Calantha's sake, pored over his books, and spent his play-hours sitting in a corner of the school-room learning the ungrateful tasks by rote.

As soon as he came into the dreadful school-room, and heard the terrible voice of his master, memory and mental power seemed at once to forsake him—he could recollect nothing.

The boys, too, who had soon learned—for such things are not long to be hidden—that he was but a poor dependant upon Miss Mordaunt's bounty, and not connected with the respected family of Mordaunt Hall in any way, treated the poor child with more than usual roughness and unkindness.

The common mind always dislikes that which it cannot altogether comprehend, more especially

if it take a form of what appears an unacknowledged superiority.

The refinement and delicacy of the child's habits, his love of personal cleanliness,—the disgust he knew not how to disguise at gross language or impious swearing,—his horror of cruelty and injustice,—his piety, his prayers night and morning,—his resolute endeavours to be quiet and attentive at church, and his resolution never to be a party in any scheme of pilfering or cruelty, disgusted and alienated these rude school-boys, to whose unawakened consciences such things appeared but as trifling peccadilloes, the commission of which was justified by their manliness and spirit.

His manners were a tacit censure upon the rest; while his situation—hapless being!—exposed him to the contempt and aversion of every one who wanted tenderness or generosity to commiserate the immensity of his misfortune.

They were not worse than many other boys; but their moral sense was uncultivated, the qualities of the heart undeveloped, and the constant example of brutality offered by the master har-

dened their perceptions, and brutalised their characters.

The poor little boy was wretched—indescribably wretched. The finer his faculties, the more intense his misery.

He was only allowed to write to Calantha letters inspected by his master; and the trouble occasioned by this inspection rendered Mr. Singletrees so ill-tempered when a letter was brought up for his perusal, that most of the boys abandoned the practice of writing home at all, and Gideon among the rest.

Calantha, whom we have left ill when Gideon set out for school, continued for many weeks in such a state of suffering, that all her powers of action and thought were suspended, or rather absorbed in the melancholy struggle with physical pain.

When she thought of Gideon, it was only to rejoice that the grand effort of sending him to school had been made before this last attack had incapacitated her for exertion of any kind. She trusted that, at all events, he would be advancing

in his education there; when, if at home, a complete stop must have been put to his lessons.

She was satisfied and at rest upon his account. How little she divined the truth!

The child in the meantime was fast verging into a state of mental imbecility and moral death. He was becoming stupid and dogged, ill-tempered and obstinate; and at times a fearful gleam of something like malignity might be seen in his once bright and loving eye, when some tyrant of the play-ground, under whose cruelty he had been suffering, would become, in his turn, the victim of brutal passion, and smarted under the rod of his unsparing master.

Such appeared the fate in store for the deserted child of such beings as Ridley and Miriam.

Such the inheritance which the profligacy of the father, and the moral weakness of the ill-starred mother, had bequeathed to this transcendent creature — heir of all their high gifts, their

fine susceptibilities, their more than earthly beauty, their noble talents, and lofty genius. Abandoned by the heartless father, by the miserable, but faithless, mother—most tender, exquisite being!—bud of sweetest promise!—and exposed to all the withering blights which surrounded that loveliest bud of promise—the new-born baby—without defence, except such as the casual charity of accident might afford.

Most fortunate he had been to fall into the hands of one so fitted as the hapless Calantha to undertake a charge, the difficulties of which, however, even she was unable altogether to overcome. They had proved too strong for her. She had been forced to abandon her charge to another upon trust. It had not been in her power to examine into the character of the master or reputation of the school, or exercise a choice. She thought, upon the whole, that what she allowed to be done was for the best, and she launched the frail bark upon the ocean of life. It was all but shipwrecked as it left the port,—poor little feeble vessel!

The boy grew worse and worse every day.

Honour and praise—blessings and grateful incense of the heart—upon the humbly and obscurely good!

Oh! in those dark dens of misery and wrong that escape the general observation—those murky corners of human society, where the power of opinion rarely penetrates—too obscure to excite attention—too low for notoriety. Honour, and blessing, and praise to the perseveringly and obscurely good!

Convents, schools, workshops, small remote manufactories, dark alleys and obscure streets in large towns, milliners' workrooms, large retail shops—all places where mankind in a yet very imperfect state congregate together, under the almost unrestricted sway of some superior no further advanced than themselves,—in all these places where so much suffering, wrong, and vice prevail, honour, and blessing, and praise to the humbly and obscurely good!

To him or to her who, uncheered by popular applause, unsupported by public approbation,

unknown and unmarked out of the little circle of the daily walk, goes on like the good apothecary immortalised by the lines of Johnson, ministering in their narrow sphere,—

“In misery’s darkest caverns known,
Whose ready help is ever nigh,
Where hapless anguish pours his groan,
And lonely want retires to die.”

The good that is done by such—the sum to which the sacred amount—the total to which their unhonoured lives attain, is known alone to Him who, when the quick and dead shall answer to the dread trumpet’s call—shrinking, shivering, and awe-struck before His throne—will render to every man according to his works.

Poor little Gideon !

In the midst of his torments of body and mind, greatly aggravated by the tyranny and stupidity of the great big boy Reynolds, whom we found most unwarrantably placed by his master as monitor, or teacher, of the little boys, when our little

hero first arrived at school. Poor little Gideon, in the midst of his sufferings, had heard his neighbours on the same form sometimes lament over the absence of Mr. Prior, and wonder whether he would ever come back.

At last Mr. Prior did come back, and the life — nay, far, far more, the soul of a child was saved.

Saved — when abandoned by those who ought to have sheltered and tended him — by the spontaneous charity of one good man, into whose sphere of action he was thus accidentally thrown.

CHAPTER IX.

“By objects that would force the soul to abate
Her feeling — rendered more compassionate.”

WORDSWORTH.

“LITTLE Prior, Prig Prior, Molly Prior, Kitty wren Prior, Preaching Prior, Tale-bearing Prior Humbug Prior”—in tones of dislike and contempt—thus he was spoken of by the higher classes.

As “Mr. Prior,” with love and reverence in their tones, by the lower.

He was Usher to the school.

One of the most painful, irksome, almost ignominious situations, that a man of talents, education, and exquisite refinement of character, can be called upon to fill.

But Prior had a widowed mother and an insane sister; and Mr. Singletrees, well aware of his value, paid him handsomely and well.

Moreover, living at Mr. Singletrees' establishment, he had the advantage of being at no great distance from the humble cottage where his mother, the widow of an exemplary man—during his whole life a curate upon ninety pounds a-year—lived, and near which, in another cottage, under the care of a kind, hearty woman, his poor crazed sister was placed.

And therefore Prior, despising the coarse malignity of too many of the boys, and patient under the irksomeness of daily communication with such a man as Singletrees, with uncompromising resolution and unflinching fortitude, endured all the evils and vexations of his position.

How pathetically has Sir Walter Scott, in the lovely sketch of Peter Pattison the usher, which precedes that wonderfully beautiful tale, "Old Mortality," touched upon the sufferings of a man of talent in such a position, employed hourly in the ungrateful task of grinding classical knowledge into schoolboys' heads!—the desecration of all those exemplary classic beauties for which he has created, as it were, temples in his mind of

minds—the wearisome round of blundering repetitions—the exhaustion of strength and spirits, which leaves no power, when the irksome task is over, for the pursuit of better things!—the sinking of the nerves, the gradual decay of the physical strength, the turmoil, the hurry, and the noise, amid which the life of being dies away!

Mr. Prior was a very small, delicate man, evidently stunted in his growth by premature privation and hardship, yet so finely proportioned that he looked like a very fine man diminished, and had none of that breadth of shoulder, bigness of head, or heaviness and shortness of limb, which results from strong physical force of temperament thus unnaturally depressed. A delicate child, he had in fact suffered less, as far as external appearance went, from a too scanty nourishment, than a more robust boy would have done.

His features were small and regular, and his complexion delicate, but ashy pale; his eye, however, expressed all the force, manliness, and almost severity of character, which the rest of his appearance so little implied; it was dark and lustrous, serene and kind in its ordinary expres-

sion, but could kindle into flashes of indignation when excited by oppression or cruelty, which shot, as it were, streams of living lightning upon an abashed culprit—or could express a stern determination in the enforcement of discipline before which the biggest boy in the school would tremble.

Mr. Prior had been lately very ill, and had been forced for a time to relinquish his task of instruction, and thus been driven by necessity to seek in change of air that refreshment for overtaxed and failing nerves which he felt to be absolutely necessary.

The fate of his unhappy sister was ever before his and his mother's eyes. He knew by his own experience what it was to tremble upon that fearful verge—that of reason—when the prospect round begins to shake, dazzle, and confuse into dreamy uncertainty—when the man within and the man without cease to be as *one*, and the fearful struggle begins for mastery.

And he had given up his task at once. Perish all—mother, sister, all—but not his reason! That was how he felt, and so felt his mother

with him. To want was wretchedness—for her to want, double wretchedness; but any thing, every thing, paradise to the alternative.

However, Mr. Singletrees valued him too highly to part with him so, and Mr. Prior had promised to return to his duties after a month's pedestrian tour in Wales.

Sweet Wales!—beautiful North Wales! How many years since I have visited your lovely mountains! The spirit of these wild regions restored the health and spirits of Mr. Prior; he came back a renovated man, and prepared to undertake the task before him with fresh alacrity and new hopes.

He came with renewed aspirations after the good of those intrusted to his care, and renewed determinations to attempt vigorously to use his influence with Mr. Singletrees to improve the discipline of the school.

Poor little Gideon was far too much depressed and broken-spirited to hope or expect any thing from the usher's return; for to him all schoolmasters were alike, all school-teaching equally wearying and hateful. He stood at an open

window, and watched the sky and the swallows soaring about on a warm July day, and longed to be a bird and not a boy, that he might soar at liberty, and enjoy that fresh, free air for which he panted.

He was grown very thin and pale; his eyes were gloomy, and his hand trembling; his book lay upon the window-seat by him. He wanted heart to begin learning the heavy imposition which the great tyrant of a monitor, for some trifling negligence, had put upon him. He stood there watching the swallows and the clouds, knowing he was wasting his time and should get punished again; but he did not care whether he was punished or not much—punishment was beginning to lose its effect.

Then he leaned his aching head against the window-bar, and his nerves, refreshed by the sweet fresh air that played upon his temples, his brain for a short time seemed to recover its old activity, and the child began to ponder and meditate as in the tangled woods of Mordaunt Hall.

He looked up at the mild blue sky, and

thought, as he had often thought before, that it was as the face of God—it looked so all-shrouding and so lovingly tender; and in its depths the little fleecy clouds sailed so free and secure; and the swallows, rapid and happy, bathed themselves in the delicious air. And he thought that all was so happy, and God so good, but that he was very, very miserable; and then he asked himself why that good God let him be so miserable, when he only wished to be good and happy; or why He let great big boys torment him, with none to take his part; and why, when God promised—a text he held written in his heart's core—that He would be a father to the fatherless, He was no father to him, but left him to be kicked about at every body's mercy, and without a friend in the world to say a good word for him. And he thought he was growing a bad boy too; he had been tempted once or twice, by unconquerable fear, to evade the truth, perhaps to tell a lie; and he had done things he ought not to have done, through terror of the bigger boys; and he began to think he should get bad altogether, and then the dreadful demon of evil would devour him.

Poor child!—the grand mystery of iniquity was unfolding before him, and he knew not where to find refuge. The God in whom he had been taught to trust seemed forsaking him. He sat down to cry, silently but very bitterly.

A light step was heard upon the stairs, but he did not turn round. He supposed it to be one of the boys, and only shrunk closer to the wall to escape notice, and, above all, to hide his tears; but he was aroused by a hand being laid upon his shoulder, and by a voice saying, —

“What little fellow is this? You are a new boy since I went from home. Who are you?”

Gideon released his shoulder, and made no answer; he was become unsociable and unamiable in his manners, especially to strangers.

“What are you sobbing up here all alone for? Oh!” — observing the book, which had fallen open upon the floor — “an imposition, is it? Why, be a man!—don’t cry about it, but learn it!”

Gideon looked up. There was something in the tone of voice in which this was said so pleasant and encouraging, that it poured like a sweet

balm upon his heart, and seemed to warm him all over.

He stretched out his little thin hands, and took up the book.

Mr. Prior -- for he, of course, it was -- looked at him with attention. His quick eye discerned the trembling of the two little wasted hands, and now he could observe the beautiful features faded by suffering, the haggard looks, the uncertain expression of the eye, and the dull, disordered, yet rich and abundant locks of this little boy.

He knew enough of schools and schoolboys -- too much of the sufferings of the weak and sensitive -- not to have his interest awakened immediately.

Instead of going on to his room, he stopped, and began to enter into conversation with the child.

“You are a new scholar—in what form?”

“Lowest, sir,” was the answer, in a low voice.

“Well, I suppose so: you need not be ashamed of that. Work hard, and you will be in the sixth at the proper time. But tell me your name, and

where you come from ; I like to hear boys' names and histories : one gets acquainted, you see. You tell me yours, and I'll tell you mine—that's fair play, and fair play's a jewel. Your name, then?"

" Gideon."

" And what else?"

The boy hesitated.

" Well?"

" Every body laughs at it. The boys say it's no name ; and Mr. Singletrees"—looking round fearfully—"when he's in a passion, calls me——"

" I don't want to hear that—I want to hear what this name is ; I am sure I shall reckon it a name—out with it!"

" Nones."

" None!—don't give me such an answer, child. You should not be impertinent, little boy, to any pastor or master—least of all to one who means kindly by you."

" I've no other name," said the little boy, sadly ; " Alice gave me that ; but I don't know, whenever they talk of my name, people are ill-natured and angry."

“I don’t mean to be either, my little boy — so tell me all about it.”

“I don’t know all; but my name is Nones, and every body has got a father and mother but me. I’ve only Miss Calantha, and she never comes near me.”

Mr. Prior began to be much interested.

“Poor child!—that’s sad, to be an orphan. I have lost *my* father, and I know what it is. But you have been crying here all alone: tell me what’s the matter? Don’t be afraid of me. We’re out of school now; and as you’ve got no father, perhaps you’d better try to make one of me. We’re not in school now—you may tell me what you’ve been crying for. Come!”

“Because God promised he’d be a Father to the fatherless, and He’s broke His word to me. Here He lets me be tossed and kicked about by every body; and I haven’t a friend in the world to take my part, and He never sends me one!”

“How do you know that? What if He should have sent me?”

“You, sir! ——”

“My dear little boy, God has sent me to this

place on purpose to be the friend of every little boy who wants one, and I am going to be yours ; but then you must be a good boy, and not toss your books away, but learn your impositions and do your tasks, and fear His name and speak the truth, or else He will not let me be able to stand your friend."

"That's what Calantha said—fear His holy name, and speak the truth, and mind my master and learn my lessons ; but they never would let me from the first day I came here. Mr. Singletrees ——"

"Oh, don't let us talk of Mr. Singletrees ! He's got a great deal to bother and vex him, so he's got me here to be the friend to his boys, and to his little boys particularly."

"I didn't think he'd been so good, or I wouldn't hate him as I do."

"No, that I am sure you would not ; and I hope when we have been friends a little while, you will learn how wrong it is to hate any one, much more the master set over you by God and your friends."

"He beats me till I'm as stupid as an ass,

and then he says I won't say my lessons; but that's Reynolds's doing—he's always telling tales of me."

"Reynolds is but a boy, and often doesn't know what he's about, I dare say," said Mr. Prior; "and it plagues a boy to have to teach others, and puts him out of temper. That's all over now, I am come to my place again. I sha'n't punish you, you will see, when you *can't* say your lessons; but be very sure I will punish you when you *won't*."

The child looked up at him with an air of something very like sturdy defiance at this speech, and said,—

"I don't like to be *made*."

"Do it without being made then, as good boys and brave men do," said Mr. Prior.

"I used to."

"When?"

"When I learned at home."

"Learn at school as you learned at home."

"I can't, it's so dull and hard—I can't make it out. I used to know," said he, with a sigh, "every thing that Miss Calantha taught me."

"Well, well, she was very clever, I dare say, that Miss Calantha; and I don't, for my own part, think it a bad sign when a boy likes to make out what he's doing. I begin to think that you could be a good and clever little fellow if you chose to set about it."

"Do you?" said Gideon, in whom all self-confidence and reliance had quite been destroyed—"do you?" with a face brightening.

"Yes, that I do; and I'll help you with might and main if you'll only try."

"Then I'll try with might and main, that I will," said the child, cheerfully; and he picked up his book, got up from the floor, and, opening the pages at the proper place, said, "I have to learn this imposition."

Mr. Prior was quite shocked at its appalling length; but he only said,—

"If it is set you, you must do it, cost what it will, you know. You *can* do it."

"Yes, if I don't go out the least bit," said Gideon, looking wistfully at the window, the glittering sun, and coursing swallows.

"Then don't go out the least bit," said Mr.

Prior, cheerfully, amazed that a child of his age could by any possibility manage such a task, and every moment more and more pleased and interested.

“Never mind the sun and the swallows—turn your head away, they will be there to-morrow. Get that imposition quite perfect; you’ll have to say it to me to-morrow; and if you *do* learn it perfect, I shall think it very promising and clever in a boy of your age, I can tell you.”

So saying he walked into his room, leaving Gideon with his book for company. He learned his imposition without the omission of a single word.

CHAPTER X.

“ Or from the bridge I lean’d to hear
The mill-dam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows every where
In crystal eddies, glance and poise.”

TENNYSON.

How different were the little boy’s feelings this morning when he entered school, and, instead of the frightful Reynolds, was called up by the gentle, yet authoritative, voice of Mr. Prior to repeat his imposition and say his lessons!

Instead of the hurried, confused, half-obstinate, half-terrified way in which he usually began to stumble through his tasks, now, as if inspired and invigorated,—magnetised, as people would say in these times,—by the serene but penetrating eye of his new master, he accomplished

the really very difficult task for a child of his age—repeated his imposition without hesitation or stumbling, and without the omission of a word, to the astonishment of his class, of Mr. Prior, and of himself.

“Very well done, indeed!” said his new friend, with a look of much approbation. “Very well, indeed, for a boy of your age; but I hope you will not give me occasion to lay more of such impositions upon you.”

The boy returned to his place, his cheeks tingling with a pleasure he had never known since he entered that room; he once more felt the delightful sentiment of self-esteem and self-confidence returning to his little heart; he knew how indefatigably he had worked to master this very difficult task, and the delight of having succeeded was new as it was extreme.

He sat there, while his companions on the same form keep peeping at him, some with looks of congratulation, some with astonishment, his pale cheeks suffused with a bright colour, his eyes bent down, it is true, but a conscious smile upon his lips—making his own reflections

upon his unexpected success, and resolving within himself to take fresh pains now he had got so kind a master.

Poor fellow! he was not equally successful in his class; he blundered and bungled, and was still at the bottom.

But the aspect of things changed in a few days.

Mr. Prior took the most heartfelt interest in the success of his pupils, more especially in that of those who held out a promise of superior talents, or appeared to possess more than ordinary sensibility; and a little observation led him to believe this child to possess both, and in no common degree.

The helpless, unprotected situation of the poor little fellow, and the extreme affection he soon manifested for himself, speedily laid the foundation of an intimacy very rare between a little child and his master in a great school—but master and child were both of them exceptions in their way.

The first kind office Mr. Prior performed for Gideon was to exert himself to overcome the prejudice which he immediately perceived that

Mr. Singletrees had imbibed against him. It was one of that most faulty person's great faults, and one which particularly ill-adapted him for the line of life he pursued, that he was apt to take the strongest and most unwarrantable prejudices against some of the boys intrusted to him, and would absolutely persecute such in the most unjustifiable manner, till a boy's spirit was broken or his temper ruined. Either he became a timid, crouching slave, divested of his best powers, or a hardened, determined rebel, upon whom punishment was exhausted in vain. The evils arising from this very heinous fault in any parent or any master, it was one aim of Mr. Prior's efforts to obviate in every case that occurred, and his efforts were never altogether in vain.

Mr. Singletrees, who was rather a rude, unformed, undisciplined, unimproved character, than a bad-hearted, unprincipled man, yielded, unacknowledged by himself, to the charm possessed by the clear reason, the beautiful imagination, the firm and righteous determination, and the gentle manners, of Mr. Prior.

He listened to his observations, and, though he never was known to acknowledge the justice of his remarks or the wisdom of his advice, usually treasured up and acted upon both. Wittingly to do what he knew Mr. Prior would think wrong, would have been almost impossible to him; and he felt much and very salutary pain and vexation when he was betrayed in his presence into any of those bursts of passion and acts of brutality, which the firm yet gentle air of authority preserved upon all occasions in his own department by Mr. Prior, silently condemned.

Mr. Singletrees was coarse, and rough, and violent, and unjust, even now, but he was better than he had been. He was beginning to improve in some degree under the benign influence to which he was exposed, instead of becoming, as he otherwise would have done, every day of his life worse and worse, under the habit of yielding upon every occasion to the temptations with which he was beset.

Much was not done in the way of positive improvement, it is true; but the hurried descent in the way of evil was, at least, arrested.

And now the boys were all gone to bed at last.

It has been a less stormy day than usual. Business had proceeded in a satisfactory manner, the formidable cane had not once been flourished, the thick hot blood that coursed through Mr. Singletrees' veins—in itself cause enough for irritation—had not been excited to a fever of fury by provocation; he was in a calmer and more peaceful mood than he had enjoyed for weeks, and he did enjoy this mood much as he and his usher sat together after supper eating bread-and-cheese.

Mr. Singletrees looked at his usher with feelings of complacency; he felt quiet and comfortable. He had done nothing that day—said nothing that day, at least,—of which his usher could disapprove, he knew. He was satisfied with himself, and consequently in more good-humour than ever with Mr. Prior.

“It's not late, Prior,” said he, laying his watch upon the table. “There's a good hour yet. What do you say to a glass of wine and a grilled toast this evening? We've not had

a snug chat since you came home. Here, Jerry, take away these things here, and ask Mrs. Bowen to send us in a grilled toast, and fetch me a candle—I'll go down to the cellar myself."

He returned with a bottle of crusted port which might have delighted the eyes of a regular connoisseur in the science of wines, and after carefully brushing the cobwebs, he drew the cork, decanted, placed it upon the table, and poured out a glass of the bright sparkling cordial for his friend.

"Come, Prior, toss it off; it will do you good, man. Here's to you, and glad to see you back with all my heart."

"Thank you, sir," said Prior; "and I may say with truth I am not sorry to be back, though I certainly did enjoy the month you were so kind as to spare me—extremely—more than I really thought it was in me to enjoy anything."

"Wales is a fine country," said Singletrees, "as I have heard; I've never taken much pleasure in that sort of romantic scenery that some are so fond of—those savage rocks and woods of which our poets speak. I don't know how it is, till I became acquainted with you I had no

relish for these things, but since I have heard you describe them, I begin to feel as if there was a sort of new sense awakened within me. I've a great mind, really, this next vacation to take my staff in *my* turn, and make a walking tour in Wales or Scotland."

"You could not do better, sir."

"The day has gone on well to-day. Matters seem to advance. Some of the boys we have will do us credit; eh, Prior?——"

Mr. Singletrees went on, reverting to a subject which, to do him justice, was generally uppermost in his thoughts.

"I think so, sir. One or two of the boys in the sixth will, thanks to your tuition, be much more fit for the University when they go up to it than most that our public schools can shew us. Unquestionably, sir, you do turn out admirable Grecians."

"Ha, ha, Prior! you're pleased to be flattering to-night. Help yourself. That Reynolds is a clever chap enough, for one instance."

"Yes, sir, he does not want for brains, certainly."

“ He’s no favourite of yours, I know — you think him a bit of a brute — he’s rough with the little boys, perhaps—the young rascals!—all the better,—takes the jackanapes out of them.”

“ I don’t like Reynolds’s ways with either great or little boys,” said Prior, “ but he will mend when he goes to the University. There is no one to cope with him for ability here. When he goes to the University, he will find that sort of thing won’t do. And, with your approbation, sir, I mean to shew him a little that it won’t do here. I’ll allow no tormenting of your little boys.”

“ Oh, you make such a fuss about these young rascals! let them learn to bear what their betters have borne before them. Don’t make ninny-hammers of them, Prior.”

“ No, no, sir, trust me, I’ll take care of that; but there’s one of those little fellows that I wished to say a few words to you about.”

“ I know, I know,” said Singletrees, his countenance clouding a little. “ The one the Mordaunts sent here. That beggar’s brat! I can’t think what you see in *him* to make such a favourite of.”

“ I try, sir,” said Prior, “ not to make favourites of any; if I am partial I am wrong, and sorry for it; but the child has peculiar claims upon my interest. I am an orphan myself, and should have been well-nigh shipwrecked if it had not been for you, sir.”

Mr. Singletrees’ eye glistened.

“ So that, perhaps, I may be forgiven for feeling more than common interest in a child I think so unfortunate; but, moreover, he is a boy of very rare promise, I can assure you, sir. There is not a boy in the school, I believe, so likely to do you credit as that little one. He will be a great man if he lives. Think of Dr. Moises and the two Scotts, sir.”*

“ Do you think so? I found him myself, and was told by Reynolds, that he was as stupid a little ass as ever was thrashed for a false quantity.”

“ He’s very young, and he has been brought up in a peculiar manner, I see; but believe me, sir, if you will allow me to follow my own method

* Lords Eldon and Stowel.

in fashioning him to your hand, never trust me again if I do not send you up a boy in a year or two that you will take the greatest pride and pleasure in, and that you will turn out prepared to reap equal distinction for himself and for yourself."

"What, that poor foundling!—Why, Prior, I've discovered he's the very child about whom there was a coroner's inquest some eight years ago. Don't you remember, a girl was found drowned in a pond?—He!"

"And why not *he*?—What matters it whence, poor unfortunate child! he drew his life?"

"Pooh, pooh! You think much of him because you're such a foolish, soft-hearted fellow, always the fool of your own pity. I tell you, a more stupid, pudding-headed, young vagabond never sat upon one of my forms!"

"It was owing, I assure you, sir, to the peculiar constitution and peculiar education of the child that he did himself so little credit—there is an extraordinary susceptibility of nerve about him."

"My dear Prior, take another glass, and don't

get into your metaphysical altitudes. You know very well they are of no use with me. Give me a good, hard-headed fellow, who can answer to the birch, not a puny little ninny, who trembles, as it were, to nothing under a rough hand. Life's rough, sir—nature's rough—men are rough—fortune's rough—these delicate, fine, cobweb compositions never come to anything worth mentioning, I can tell you. I don't like the child—he's a little puny thing one's afraid to touch. I never gave him a cuff that I didn't feel as if I were beating a sucking child. I don't like it, sir—it's not my sort. I can tell you I hate such delicate bits of china, too fine to be handled or used—of such miserable pigmies nothing great can ever be made——

“ I beg your pardon, Prior,” interrupting himself, for his eye chanced to glance upon the small, white, delicately-formed hand which lay upon the table, “ there are exceptions to all rules, and I know one to this. But, to tell you the truth, I took a dislike to that young powder-monkey from the first.”

“ I think, sir,” said Prior, “ that if you had

found opportunity to observe him you would have altered your opinion. You place a little confidence in my judgment, I am proud to think. Will you allow me to exercise it with regard to this child?—I will engage to send him up to you in a year or two, as I said before, such as you will delight to have in your hands. We shall have a double first out of him, sir.”

“ You really think this? Help yourself.”

“ Thank you—no more. I really do; the boy is worth more than ordinary pains—but I wish to pursue, in some degree, a method of my own with him.”

“ That will never do. A method of your own!—in a school of this description!—Pooh, pooh, Prior! you’re a sensible fellow—don’t talk nonsense.”

“ I assure you, sir, the plan I propose will not interfere in the least with the routine or discipline of the school. I am quite aware of the absurdity there would be in that. All I intended was to erect myself into a sort of private tutor to this boy in my leisure hours. I assure you he wants a peculiar preparation to fit him for profiting by

the discipline of the school. My only wish is to give him this ; but for this purpose I should have to single him out in a way I do not choose to do without your permission and approbation. I also wish to be allowed to take him out of the dormitory where he is peculiarly unhappy, and to have his little bed put into my own room."

" Much he'll thank you for that, unless he's the veriest Miss Molly that ever blubbered in a pinnafore. Why, do you think these little scoundrels don't like better to be hatching mischief together than saying their prayers and listening to wise saws from you ?"

" I don't know for that ; but I see the child is losing his health where he is, so, if I have your permission, I shall take upon myself to move him without asking his leave."

" Well, do as you like ; you'll make the boy wretched with your good intentions, Prior. Mark my words, nothing is so hated as a favourite — ' a favourite has no friend ' — true as we sit here ; but do as you like."

Mr. Singletrees did not, in fact, care enough for Gideon to interfere further in the matter.

Gideon's bed was the next day moved into Mr. Prior's room.

I do not know how far he was right, still less how far he should exactly be called disinterested, in thus endeavouring to single out from the mass this one child, and to give him peculiar advantages. Not that I mean to imply that he was in the least wronging others by so doing, he was far too conscientious for that. The pains and attention he intended to devote to this boy were scrupulously abstracted from the time that was properly and certainly his own. No one was less attended to because Gideon was in a manner adopted as a child—a little brother of his own might have been. I only meant to say, that it may be doubted how far this singling out of a child in such a community might contribute to that child's present happiness.

That it would contribute to his ultimate advantage, no one can doubt.

I said, too, that I thought I must not call this

action of his exactly disinterested, because, if what we do from affection suddenly conceived, still more from that yearning of a loving heart after some object upon which to lavish its wasted treasures of affection, be not disinterested — this action was not.

Certainly Mr. Prior had felt the purest compassion for the poor little boy, but he likewise was deeply interested by him — there seemed a sort of natural sympathy between them — there was that in the child to which his heart cleaved. He could imagine no greater pleasure than to protect and develope this fair and tender plant — to him so very fair, contrasted with the rude beings by whom he was surrounded.

It was an occupation in harmony with that inner man with which the life he led was in such rude contrast.

He used to instruct the little boy in his play-hours; and, by his enlightened method of preparing him, soon made him more than competent for the lessons of his class. The child advanced with a rapidity that astonished every one.

This rapid advance might have excited envy, but, after all, no one did envy Gideon ; the many hours spent in learning, while they were engaged in play, was an unenviable distinction after all.

The little boy, indeed, was now not very often among them ; he clung to Mr. Prior with an affection such as a little faithful dog seems to feel towards his master. There was nothing he would not do for him. No office so humble that he would not, if permitted, have performed. One word from Mr. Prior was enough—he became as obedient as he had before been refractory, as indefatigable as he had been idle.

His little heart once more swelled with generous impulses and high resolutions. His countenance expanded—his form developed.

Mr. Singletrees forgot his aversion, and looked upon the child with pride and admiration.

Mr. Prior idolised him.

He, however, speedily observed and corrected the disposition to avoid the company of his fellows in play-hours, and launched him unmercifully into the midst of them to take his chance, bear to be rudely attacked, and learn

to defend himself. But Gideon, now vigorous, and full of hope and spirits, made his way good ; and such was the influence of his courage, generosity, and good-humour, that even to be Mr. Prior's acknowledged favourite could not render him unpopular.

But the greatest delight of both was upon those Saturday evenings when the majority of the boys went home. Then they strolled out together, and enjoyed the charming scenes with which the neighbourhood abounded.

To stray by the side of a pebbly, rushing mountain-stream, clear as crystal, transparent as glass—to wander among the oaks and hazels that hung over it, watching the blue water-beetles in their curling eddies, the trout glancing through the waters, or listening to the cooing dove, or spinning night-hawk, as he glided by, was their delight. The child would begathering water-plants, the yellow flower-de-luce, the rosy, flowering rush, the blue-water pimpernel, or forget-me-nots, and be taught by Mr. Prior to examine their construction and distinguish them by names ; or be climbing trees in pursuit of bird-nests to visit, not rob ; or be

paddling in the stream, catching at the various creatures that inhabit the glancing waters, encouraged to all species of childish enterprise, while Mr. Prior sat reading under a spreading oak-tree, happy as the little being that fluttered so gaily round him.

The exquisite sensations of the child upon these occasions it is vain to attempt to describe. Some may remember such in their own youth—some have forgotten such things. These delights were, with him, worked up, as it were, into his very being; and were the food upon which the fine imaginative, poetic power which afterwards adorned still choicer gifts was nourished.

Sometimes these evening walks used to end in drinking tea with Mrs. Prior; this was a high delight.

Mrs. Prior lived in the humblest manner, in a very small straw-thatched cottage, situated in this particular little dell. The cottage perched upon a little precipitous knoll, the clear coursing brook ran before her door; while cliffs, covered with the rich tangled underwood, rose almost perpendicularly behind the house. There

was a little garden upon one side, beautifully kept, and full of flowers; and there were beehives, whose humming inhabitants drew from these flowers honey, as beauteous, pure, and sweet, as ever flowed from Hybla.

The little boy thought this place a perfect fairy-land. He was never tired of wandering among the bowers of sweet-peas, bushes of lavateras, and hedges of larkspurs; of watching two little tame gulls, that ran about among the flower-beds, or the bees at their work upon a sunny afternoon.

The little loaf, the pure delicate honey, his own little cup, saucer, and plate—was anything ever so delightful?

He loved that old lady, so mild and so kind, with her snow-white hair rolled up under her widow's cap; her plain black gown and white handkerchief pinned so quaintly over her bosom.

Mr. Prior used to leave him with her while he went out for about an hour; but he was never tired of being with her.

She used to talk to him in a simple, pious way, and turn his little thoughts to duty and

to God. The seeds which Calantha had planted sprung up to bear good fruit under this gentle teaching.

The old lady was grave and melancholy, it is true; but what cared he? children do not dislike gravity, and even melancholy, in those so much older than themselves; it is ill-humour, querulousness, and complaint, that weary and alienate them.

Prior was gone during these absences to visit his unhappy sister, who lived under the care of a stout, kind-hearted woman, in a cottage yet more secluded than his mother's, about a mile higher up the vale. It was a matter of great expense and difficulty to keep her in this private way; but every sacrifice was made to the *sacred insane*—the stricken in the core.

He looked upon her with a compassion, the intensity of which could be only equalled by its *justice*. He insisted upon a treatment of the greatest tenderness and kindness; he felt that we know not what vague torturing wants and wishes, ill understood by those around, and impossible for the suffering to explain, might

be lurking under the apparent caprices of these unhappy ones, and goading them to those exhibitions of violence, or sulkiness of temper, which render them, alas! so troublesome and unamiable.

The poor thing was all this; but by him she was never thought either troublesome or unamiable. He had an inexhaustible well of pity and compassion ever springing up within his heart for her.

He used to come home from these expeditions looking grave and sorrowing, and his mother would meet him looking grave and sorrowing too; then they would exchange mournful looks; then he would kiss his mother; and then they would sit down to tea together, cheered by the presence of this little child, who was become so dear to both.

Thus did the influences of goodness, tenderness, and love, display themselves in this humble condition.

CHAPTER XI.

“How e’er it be, it seems to me
’Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

TENNYSON.

I HAVE lingered longer than I intended upon this picture.

It has been to me most pleasant to reflect upon all the wide, diffused influences of a thoroughly good and able man, exercised, as I have said, in so humble a station.

The earth, in its obscure corners, holds many, many such.

Blessed spirits! following the steps of their Divine Master, “who went about doing good.”

Calantha received her little boy, when his

half-year's absence had expired, with a beating heart.

He found her much paler and thinner than he had left her ; but she was astonished and delighted at the improvement which had taken place in him.

They had been separated for five months, during which he had seen neither Calantha nor Alice. She, poor thing ! had been in London for advice, and thence to the sea ; and had but just returned to Mordaunt Hall, when the little boy came home for the holidays.

She returned exhausted by suffering, and by the various remedies which had in vain been tried by the most skilful in the profession, in the fruitless attempt to cure this obscure complaint. Wearied with the ineffectual struggle, sick of hopes so often cheated, she had returned home, resigning herself in patient sweetness to the will of Him who had appointed her cross—submitting in faith to His appointments, and substituting the better and unseen hopes for those flattering visions of earthly happiness which it is so hard for youth altogether to sur-

render. Many an anxious thought she had cast in her helplessness towards that corner of a northern county where her poor little foundling was at school; much had she grieved that there was no one to visit him upon whom she could rely—indeed, no one that she could properly even ask to take so much trouble about this friendless being. Her mother was with her at the sea-side; Mordaunt Hall was shut up for several months; the boy must take his fate.

He was now nine years old. He was much grown and slenderer than when she had parted with him, but his frame was lithe, well-knit, and active; his face bronzed with the colour of health, and his eyes beaming with intelligence. He had not, however, it is true, improved in the external graces whilst he had been at Mr. Singletrees' academy; the elegant habits of Mordaunt Hall had been almost forgotten; his voice was less gentle, his gestures more abrupt, and his dress in sad disorder.

Of such matters there was no one to take charge where he had been. Every one is insen-

sibly moulded by the external circumstances which surround him,—a plastic child, such as this, more especially.

Calantha was well satisfied with his growth and improvement, and charmed with the open, happy, intelligent expression of his countenance, his frank, confiding air and manner, and the affection with which he met herself—but, to own the truth, she was disappointed to perceive a something rustic in his look and tones; a certain roughness of appearance, to which she, accustomed to the polished, elegant dress and address of her nephews and nieces, was but too much alive. Perhaps these little defects were more apparent, because the boy had lost the timidity, the shyness, or the pride—be it which it might—which had made him so little demonstrative and so quiet before he left her. He had lived with his equals in age and strength—his inferiors in manners; he had learned to rely upon himself, and had been lately as happy as possible, and he came home loaded with prizes, which he shuffled into her hands.

“And here’s a letter from Mr. Prior, our usher; he writes the characters of the three lowest forms, I shall be in the third form when I go back.”

“And so you like school, Gideon?”

“To be sure I do now—but, Miss Calantha, I was very unhappy at first, but since Mr. Prior came back I’ve been *so* happy, and I’ve got on; I couldn’t do anything till Mr. Prior came home.”

“Well, sit down by my sofa and take off your hat: and see what dirty hands, and your face—how hot you are! Alice, do take him into his own little room—I’ve got an own little room for you, dear Gideon, now—you will like to see it—but make him change his shoes and his clothes, and wash his face and hands, before my mother sees him.”

“*I* never saw a child sent home in such a pickle from school before! Hadn’t they the grace to wash your hands, child, before they sent you back?”

“It’s all my fault, I was in such a hurry to get back to see Miss Calantha, that I put on

my hat and ran down to the coach with my bag in my hand—you'll find my things all stuffed in there—and I've been scrambling up a big tree to look at a magpie's nest I spied—Mr. Prior told me they were curious things—so I've dirtied my hands, and torn my knees a bit."

"Hands! what hands!" exclaimed Mrs. Alice, in dismay. "Why, they're the colour of a negro's. It looks as if you had never had a pair of gloves on since I parted with you at Singletrees' door."

"No more, I do believe, I have. The boys don't mind such things there, no more does Mr. Prior, I believe."

"Well, come along, let's see what soap and water will do; I wouldn't have Mrs. Mordaunt, or Mr. Mordaunt, see him in this pickle for all the world—I wouldn't, Miss Calantha! I never saw such hands in all my life. That Mr. Prior must be a vulgar, dirty fellow, I'll be bound, just like that horrid, coarse Singletrees!"

The unclouded eye and animated countenance fell at the beginning of this speech; but the

hot colour flushed into his cheek at its conclusion.

He pushed Alice away, pulled his hand from her, and said,—

“How dare you say that of Mr. Prior? He’s the best and cleverest man in the wide world, and delicates than five hundred such as you, Mrs. Alice. I don’t want my hands washed by *you*—I’ll do it myself.”

“Hush! hush, Gideon! how violent you are!” said Calantha.

He looked up at her with reproach in his eye; then turned away, and said sulkily,—

“I won’t bear to hear Mr. Prior spoken against!”

“No, my dear,” said Calantha, gently, “you shall not; and you ought not to bear to hear so good a friend, as you say he has been to you, spoken against, but Alice only said it because she’s vexed to see your hands so brown and burnt.”

“What signifies *hands*? Mr. Prior never told me about hands.”

“What did he tell you about, then?”

“ Learning and goodness, and the way to be a clever boy and a good boy, and how to work at lessons, and a number of good things, but he never told me about *hands*,” repeated Gideon, with an accent of contempt.

“ Well, my dear, at school they did indeed little signify in comparison with other things; and every where they are not to be weighed in the balance against the really valuable things, but yet Mr. Prior made a mistake if he taught you to despise such little attentions, because the want of them might make you disagreeable to people of delicacy.”

“ He never taught me about them any way; but this he taught me, Miss Calantha,” said the boy, conquering himself with some difficulty, “ that I could never do enough to shew my thankfulness to you, and to Alice, too,” said he, looking up at her; “ so, if you please, I’ll go and scrub my hands as hard as possible, or anything else you and Alice wish.”

And now another half-year has passed over his head at school, and the vacation is come again ; and again he returns home, his hands full of prizes, with a letter of much approbation from Mr. Prior ; but his hands are as brown, his hair as unkempt, and his clothes as untidy as ever.

His little heart, however, is beating with affection, and honest pride, and with delight at the idea of returning to Mordaunt Hall again ; for his last Christmas holidays of three weeks—the first holidays he had spent there—had been very happy ones.

No company happened to be in the house at that time. Mr. Mordaunt was confined with a fit of the gout, Mrs. Mordaunt was much engaged in attendance upon him, so Calantha and Gideon had the large house to themselves. He was allowed to ramble about wherever he pleased, into drawing-room, dining-room, billiard-room, or library. Mrs. Mordaunt and Calantha dined at luncheon-time, and he enjoyed the privilege of sitting down with them to get his dinner. Not one single circumstance arose to remind him of what he was.

In the mornings he roamed about the crisped woods, enjoying the beautiful fairy frost-work upon every branch and spray; he fed the starving robin-redbreasts from Calantha's window-sill; he followed the tracks of the different wild animals in the snow, or slid and skated upon the ponds. In the evening he sat by Calantha's blazing fire, upon his little stool, reading to her the adventures of "Sinbad the Sailor," or the "Little Hunchback," or the wondrous horse of brass, whilst she lay upon her sofa knitting, netting, or carpet-working, or doing whatever her never idle hands could find strength to employ themselves in.

Alice had found him so good and so docile that she quite doted upon him. Calantha loved him as the apple of her eye.

It had been a blissful vacation, such, poor little boy! as it was natural one so young and so promising should enjoy at every vacation; but it was marked as an exception in his blighted life.

It is in the lovely month of June that he comes home again.

He had this time counted the days till his return. Mordaunt Hall had become dearer than ever—the remembrance of the last happy Christmas was continually before him. For once he felt that happy confidence which every child ought to feel at returning *home*. He called it *home*, when he spoke of it to the other boys, with pride and pleasure.

He had worked indefatigably and had carried all before him ; he was at the top of the third class, his heart was filled with elation, and his spirits bounding with joy. He came in through the stable-yard, it was crowded with servants, carriages, and horses ; the house was full of company, for the family party were assembled again, but he stayed not to remark or consider anything, he ran up the back stairs, down the gallery, and burst into Calantha's dressing-room.

His clothes disordered as ever, his hair rough and uncut, his hat on one side, but his cheeks glowing and eyes glistening, he burst in and threw himself into Calantha's arms, pouring his prizes a second time into her lap.

There was a very fine lady sitting by the fire ;

but he did not notice her. It was Mrs. Archer. She drew up, looked at Calantha with an air of mingled condemnation and astonishment, and said,—

“Really, I didn’t think it would ever have come to *that*.”

“You have been a very good boy, Gideon, I see,” said Calantha, a little discomposed by her sister’s manner, and vexed that she should be present at their first meeting. “Are these all your prizes? How pretty they are! but take off your hat, my dear, and go and shake hands with Mrs. Archer.”

He had not forgotten to wash his hands this time, but they were just as rough and brown, nay, browner than before.

“What can you be thinking of, Calantha?” said Mrs. Archer, rising with a certain expression of disgust, and withdrawing her hand,—“you are *impayable*.”

As the boy, who had leaned with all the familiarity of a younger brother against Calantha’s lap, looking up in her face with the most un-

doubting confidence, turned to do as he was bid, and held out his hand,—

“ Little master, I think you might take your hat off, at least, when you come into a lady’s dressing-room ;” and away she walked, thinking to herself,—

“ I never *did* see anything so absurd and romantic as Calantha is—to treat that rough, overgrown boy just as if he were one of the family, and to expect others to do the same. She may please herself as far as she is concerned, but if she expects the rest of us to give into this nonsense, she will find herself mistaken. Excessively disagreeable for the children ! If I had but recollected that it was that unfortunate creature’s holidays, I would have kept away till they were over ; but there’s no help for it now, and I don’t think Alfred and Algernon are very likely to wish to associate with him, for that, positively, I will not allow.”

Children are ready enough to imbibe the spirit of pride, insolence, and vanity, which they observe in their parents. To look down upon

others is as great a satisfaction to the child as to the man, and its exhibition is attended with features just as odious.

The children were ready enough to obey the injunctions they received, and not to get too familiar with poor Gideon; and the boy, who returned flushed with victory, and filled with the honest consciousness of worth, from his school and from Mr. Prior, had now first tasted the bitterness of all those innumerable mortifications, slights, and contempts, which the haughty and exclusive in this world know how to inflict upon their inferiors.

What were the triumphs achieved in a second-rate school, like Mr. Singletrees', to young gentlemen from Eton and Harrow? What the merit, physical or moral, of a boy, clothed as was Gideon, to *them*? With such a jacket and such shoes, who could or would associate? or with hands like copper colour, and face all freckled? What mattered it that he was an active, handsome, clever, sweet-tempered boy? Still less that he was a brave, honourable, truthful, God-fearing boy? Still less that

he was a loving, imaginative, sensitive, intellectual boy?

What mattered such real merits? What mattered such sterling qualities? What matter such things?

“Who gives not to rust that is some little gilt,
More praise than gilt o’er-rusted.”

Who cared for what he could do or had done?

Calantha sighed, and put his little hard-earned badges of honour into her secretary drawer, and loved him all the more dearly and closely. But what could she do? Could she interfere? Could she plead for him? It would only have made matters worse. She would sit at her window, which looked out upon the lawn, and commanded a view of the woods and shrubberies; and she would see those boys and girls, favoured by fortune and affection, going out in a merry, joyous group, with their ponies and their pony-carts, and their fishing-rods and their baskets, intent upon some scheme of pleasure, for still it was Librty Hall at the Mordaunts’, and the grandchildren enjoyed the supreme felicity of spend-

ing their holiday time as they would. Then half-an-hour after they were gone, she would see Gideon quite alone, with no companion save a very ugly old dog that had belonged to the gardener, stealing away by himself into the wood.

What he suffered under these circumstances, the bitter disappointment, the longing to join the plays of the others, the cravings for affection and companionship, the burning revolt of pride, the deep indignation, the paroxysms of revengefulness and rage, and the profound melancholy, may be guessed at by those, and by those only, whose genial spring of boyish hope and confidence has thus been blighted in the bud.

He wandered about the woods alone, he neglected his dress and appearance; he spent whole days, thrown upon the wiry grass under some of the huge fir-trees, in the most rocky and savage part of the grounds, his face resting upon his folded arms, in a sort of stupid and dogged resentment.

At other times, for he was but a young child

still, he would creep, unperceived, among the thickets, and watch the others at their play.

Mr. and Mrs. Chandos had not yet arrived, but were expected every day.

CHAPTER XII.

“Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river.”

TENNYSON.

A BRIGHT July morning, about seven o'clock, and, oh ! how sweet and lovely a morning it is !

The soft, misty air is blending every object into beauty ; the wind is swaying among the branches of the huge oaks that overhang the path through the wood, rising and falling in such gentle swells, and clothed with underwood of every tint and every form. Here towers the black, shining holly ; and there plays the pendent beech ; and there the light aspen throws its slender column into the sky, and shivers in the breeze ; and there the ash and the hazel, tuft above tuft,

minge with the pyramids of larch and pine, that here and there break out among them ; and the mavis is singing upon the top of a tree, and the blackbird piping in the thick bushes, and the squirrel leaping from bough to bough. All nature rejoicing in her tranquil liberty, undisturbed by foot of man at that early hour.

But Gideon has wandered out in his solitude, and is there sitting upon the grass behind a thick holly-bush, from which he commands a view of a long, meandering path, ending in a seat at some distance, but from which path he himself cannot be seen. He is watching a spotted woodpecker, busy at work upon an ancient oak, with shaggy withered arms, close by. He hears voices, and then, from behind the thicket, round which the path wound, he sees two figures emerge.

A gentleman in a morning dress, who holds a little girl by the hand.

Above three years it had been since he had seen them, but he recollected them both perfectly.

Mr. Chandos, for he it was, was dressed in a

light morning-coat which harmonised with his delicate complexion; his fine features still preserved all their symmetry and beauty, but the melancholy and depression of his air were much increased since we saw him last. The little girl in his hand has exchanged her three years for six, and the sweet baby is become a neat, sprightly-looking, extremely pretty, but still extremely small, little girl: she is dressed in a pink and white striped frock, as simply as possible; has a little white tippet round her neck, and a straw bonnet tied with a green riband upon her head.

Gideon had never forgotten her. She had been the fairy queen of all his poetic dreams—the sweet spirit attendant upon all his fancies—and now the boy saw her again.

She was prattling cheerfully away to her father; and every now and then uttering little shrieks of delight as some beautiful object or another struck her eye—some butterfly fluttered past, some bird glanced across her path—alive to every new sensation, excited to innocent ecstasy by every thing that was beautiful or fair.

Sometimes she loosed his hand and started off into the thicket, while he stood following her with his eye,—then she ran back, took hold of his hand, and went on prattling as before.

How fondly, how proudly, how devotedly; did Mr. Chandos follow with his eyes this sweet child! his only earthly treasure!—consolation of a disappointed heart, enlivener of a too morbid sensibility, spring of perennial peace and joy!

And how intently, how devouringly, did Gideon watch her as she passed along!

From that day he no longer sought the thickets to hide himself from the children—to escape the sound of their merriment, in which he was not allowed to partake, and indulge his melancholy and his resentment alone.

From that day he was always creeping about in the underwood, as near to the group as he could steal undiscovered, watching them at their play. In this new and interesting occupation he seemed to have forgotten his painful sense of mortification, and to be so intent upon observing what was going on as to be quite satisfied.

He enjoyed, in truth, this solitude to which he

was condemned by their pride and unkindness because he could watch one being without interruption.

There she was among the rest,—the sweetest, the gayest, the most active, the most obliging, the most busy and enterprising of them all. Little as she was, she made her way without difficulty. She was always at the head of every scheme, and the most forward in every enterprise. Her spoil of nosegays was the biggest when they came home from their walks in the fields—her little frock the most full of moss and pebbles and childish treasures.

When they played at burnball or trapball, who ran about with the activity of little Kitty? who threw the ball with a better aim—who scrambled up the pony more readily—or played at old man and ass more happily? feeding the old pet ass with bundles of grass, which she was never weary of collecting for him. No little busy bee was ever more busy or cheerful than she.

The great boys were ready to eat her up. The elder girls petted her; the little ones doted upon her. Ever active and gay—ever sweet-tempered

and complying—ever ready with her pity and help in every slight disaster which befell others—ever making light of her own little misadventures, and meeting them with a cheerfulness and good-humour that was perfectly charming!

So he watched her as he stole about—sometimes venturing nearer, sometimes at a distance.

He would wander into the fields early in the morning—now in the heyday flower-time of the year—and gather her king-cups and ox-eye daisies, and beautiful clusters of hedge-row roses and white sweet honeysuckles, orchises or blue pimpernel, and make large nosegays; and then he would venture, when he could catch her alone, to bring them to her, pop them into her hand without uttering a word, and run away again.

“Thank you, boy!”—

That voice so sweet—sweet and clear as a bell—would ring in his ears for the whole day afterwards.

One day he brought her a nest with callow birds in it; and when she looked up in his face with a grieved and pitying compassion in her little countenance, he ventured to say,—

“Don’t think I was so cruel as to take it. Mr. Prior taught me not—I bought it of some boys who had got it, and I thought you would be kinder to it than they would. I thought you’d like it, too.”

“Thank you, little boy—I like it very much, indeed—but why do you never come and play with us?”

“I mustn’t—don’t tell them. Shall I carry the nest up to your room, and now and then I’ll come and shew you how to feed them?”

“Pretty little things!” said she, quite delighted with her treasure. “Oh, no! thank you; I will not give you the trouble, I will carry them myself.”

He turned away disappointed.

She took the nest away, little thinking, young creature! as she carried it carefully up-stairs to her nursery, how much pain she had inflicted by her desire to avoid giving any one trouble. To have been allowed to walk after her, carrying something for her, this was the highest amount of his wishes and ambition.

A pebbly stream with high sandy banks, over which the green and yellow boughs are shading—the sand-bank has rolled down in large pieces in various places, and forms tiny rocks and precipices on each side. Now the clear and crystal stream runs humming among the pebbles, laving the yellow sandy, tiny shores; there huge reeds and flags grow up, between which the blue dragon-fly is sporting: the fish leap up from time to time after the gilded insects that sport upon the bosom of the waters, and in some darker and deeper pools—for such there are in different places—the little green-legged coot may be seen leading forward her callow brood to sport and play.

The children are all busy here to-day. They are enjoying, this hottest of summer days, the supreme delight of paddling in the water, and sailing boats—fleets of gaudy-coloured flower-leaves along the stream. There are huge vessels of the black and scarlet poppy-leaves; pin-naces of marygold petals, and deep blue columbine and pimpernel for little boats; some of the boys have made themselves rude ships of pieces of

wood, and rigged them as best they might—all are busy and happy as they can be.

Little Kitty—her frock dabbled up to her knees, her bonnet on one side, her tippet all awry, her little face heated with the sun, and her chest panting—is endeavouring in vain to tow her fleet of many-coloured flower-boats into a miniature harbour she has made—in vain, a provoking eddy gets hold of them, and they are whirled down the stream.

She claps her little hands, and utters a cry of despair.

“Hush! hush! look here!—don’t say anything—put it in your harbour!”

He darted from behind a thicket and put his offering into her hand.

It was the most beautiful of fairy gifts.

A walnut-shell boat, with mast of ivory and sail of snow-white silk, and pennant of pale blue, and rose-coloured upper sail. She uttered a scream of delight as she placed it in the water.

“Look! look! what I have got. Thank you!—thank you!”

“Oh, what a *lovely* boat!—how nicely it sails!” cried many voices.

“It will be in the eddy,” said the biggest Archer. “Here, Kitty, take care, you’ll lose your boat. See, there it goes!”

But she dashed into the water and rescued her prize.

“Oh!” said Algernon, “I know a place where we’ll sail it beautifully. There! a little higher up, where the water is so still and dark.”

It was still, and it was dark, for it was deep.

The little creature, ever complying and obliging, followed him.

The tiny boat was launched upon the bosom of the waters; freighted with a treasure of rubies and pearls—scarlet fuchsia and daisy leaves—it sailed steadily and well.

They were all in delight—Kitty in a perfect ecstasy.

She stood upon one of these heaps of sand and gravel that had fallen from the bank into the stream, and waved her little white handkerchief and shouted for joy.

Brief joy! She overreached herself, uttered one scream, and fell souse overhead into the water!

There was a general cry,—“Kitty! Kitty!—

help! help!" They clambered screaming up the banks, shrieking for help,—“Kitty’s drowning! Kitty’s drowning!”

But Gideon had watched it all from his hiding-place. The boy neither ran away nor screamed, but dashing like lightning from the thicket, plunged into the water, and caught the little pink frock, which was just rising to the surface again, with his hand. His mouth filled with water—green shadows danced before his eyes—his head was all confusion—but he floundered on, and, with a strength and courage almost incredible in a boy of his age, succeeded in dragging her to the bank.

She had not been long enough in the water to lose her senses.

As soon as he had got her to the bank, she looked at herself ruefully, and began to cry.

“Oh, don’t cry—pray don’t cry, dear Kitty!”

“It’s so cold, and I’m so wet—and where’s my bonnet?”

“Oh, there’s your bonnet sailing down the brook!—Don’t mind your bonnet; but if you do I’ll go in again and get it you.”

“ Oh, no!—oh, no!—you’ll be drowned; but I’m so wet, and they’ve all run away! Dear me! dear me!”

“ Don’t cry, little girl—I’ll take care of you home; let me carry you.”

“ No, no, I won’t be carried!”

“ Then give me your hand, and don’t cry;” taking out his own handkerchief, but which was as wet as hers, and trying to dry her eyes with it. “ Come along up this bank, dear—you’ll soon be at home.”

So they were travelling along hand in hand, both dripping wet; poor little Kitty crying all the way, and Gideon comforting her as well as he could.

The cry of the children had by this time reached the house; it had aroused every one. Mr. Chandos had started from his book, and, half dead with terror, his face pale as death, his hair dishevelled, and without his hat, was hurrying to the stream: he was followed by Lucilla wildly screaming, clasping her hands, and running like one distracted.

Mrs. Mordaunt was hastening down the bank as fast as was possible for her, Mr. and Mrs.

Archer, Mr. Bedingfield and his wife, and Ernest, all aroused by the wild cries of the children, were hastening to the spot from various quarters, followed by the gardeners and other servants.

Mr. Chandos, his heart beating so violently that he could scarcely breathe, his limbs trembling so excessively that they could scarcely support him, followed at a little distance by Lucilla, who was flying towards the stream, just reached the thicket as the two children — the one sobbing with all her might, and the other soothing and comforting her, emerged from it.

The father rushed forward, extended his arms, and falling upon the ground, wrapped them round his child, and caught her to his bosom. He could not speak — he could scarcely breathe. She was alive — he had her still; darkness came over his eyes, the ecstasy of the moment was too much.

Lucilla was more demonstrative.

She rushed towards her child, uttering exclamations in every key, pouring out her expressions of joy and thankfulness, mingled with half-con-

temptuous, half-pitying addresses to her husband, such as—

“ Dear Mr. Chandos, how you do take it! I declare I think you’ve fainted. Look at the child!—Why, you are as wet as a sponge.— Let her go, for goodness’ sake, Charles; the child is perishing with cold, and must be stripped immediately. Come, Kitty.”

But the child’s arms were clasped round her father’s neck, and her head buried in his bosom.

“ I declare I never saw anything like you, Charles,” said his wife, shaking him by the shoulder. “ For goodness’ sake, rouse yourself! Do you see the poor little thing is dripping like a naiad?” and she laughed.

But he had recovered by this time from the rush of blood which intense emotion had sent to his heart; he cast one look at his child, whom he still held fast in his arms—such a look!—and then slowly rising from the ground, his little girl still clasped to his bosom, walked away with her to the house.

“ I declare,” thought Lucilla to herself, “ he is the most incomprehensible of human beings—

falling down, fainting almost, like a mere girl; and then walking off with the poor little sop, without once even thanking this brave child, who has evidently saved her.

“ You good boy !” said she, turning to him as he stood there with a disappointed countenance at seeing the little creature, whom he was so carefully and delightedly tending and consoling, thus abruptly carried away from him ; he, treated with the usual neglect, and not one word of thanks or approbation vouchsafed to him. “ You good boy !” said Lucilla, kindly ; “ for I am sure, by your wet clothes, you have been in the water after her. Come along with me to the house ; some of the other boys’ clothes will fit you. You must be changed before you go home. Where do you come from ?”

“ I live up at the house,” said Gideon.

“ Why, who can you be ?” cried Lucilla, eagerly. . . . “ Oh, what a fool I am ! I quite forgot. I declare you’re the very boy they all used so unkindly when we were here years ago, I do believe !—What’s your name ? I forget—but I thought it a shame, I remember, poor little fel-

low! being left out in the way they did. And now, I'll be bound, you've jumped into the water, and saved little Kitty at the risk of your life, while all those fine gentlemen ran away. Wasn't it so? I'm so delighted!"

"The water is not very deep," said Gideon, modestly. "I was not afraid of being drowned."

"Drowned or not drowned, you've both been over head and ears, I see. Deep!—it's deep enough, I dare say. So they all ran away, screaming—the brave fellows!—and left my poor little, tiny Kitty to swim to Whitstaple, for what they could do.—I'm so glad!"

Gideon did not quite understand why she was so glad; but he was beginning to shiver with cold, now the excitement was over, and he said,—

"Perhaps I'd better go and change my clothes."

"Ay, do; for you're shaking like an aspen. Run along, and I'll follow you; but tell me, first—I'm right, ain't I? You're Calantha's boy; isn't it so?—the one Julia and I had such a battle about once upon a time?"

“ Alice says I mustn’t call myself Miss Calantha’s boy.”

“ Does she ? — Cautious Alice ! ” laughing ;
“ then whose boy are you to call yourself does she say ? ”

“ Mr. Nones’,” in a low tone ; and the deep crimson suffusing his cheek : he had learned to dread the question, and to understand the meaning of the answer.

“ Capital ! — That’s Alice’s wonderful invention, is it ? Well, that woman is better than a comedy ; and does Calantha call you Mr. Nones’ child ? ”

“ She calls me Gideon.”

“ Oh, yes, I remember, now. Gideon ! I recollect it all as if it was yesterday. — Gideon ! I remember I had the curiosity to go and read it all in the book of Judges. Dear Calantha, she’s quite *impayable* — an angel-given child. Well, I hope you’ll sometime or other be a great captain like Gideon, and shame them all — that’s what I say.”

“ Mr. Prior tries to make me, ma’am.”

“ Bravo !—And who’s Mr. Prior ? ”

“ Our usher.”

“ Oh, you *do* go to school, then. Well, I’m glad they’ve had the grace to do that. I was just thinking to offer to send you myself—for it seemed to me Calantha meant to do nothing for you—as a reward for what you’ve done to-day ; but depend upon it, Gideon, I won’t forget it. I shall find some way or other of serving you ; and in the meantime here’s a guinea all for your own self to begin with.”

There was much in her speeches which the boy did not comprehend—much that he did ; and all that he did wounded him. He said nothing now, but put back the offered guinea and her hand.

“ Poor child ! don’t be modest. I dare say you never had so much pocket-money together in your life ; it will make you quite a king at school ; take it, I say—I’m sure you richly deserve it.”

“ No, thank you,” in a low, trembling tone ;
“ no, thank you,— I would rather not.”

“ My goodness, dear, don’t be foolish. You need not be afraid to take it ; you well deserve it,

and a vast deal more, I'm sure; but this is only for your wetting. Put it in your pocket, child, and say no more about it."

But he turned away, and a tear sprang to his proud eye.

She continued to press the money upon him, but in vain.

"Well, upon my honour," at last she said, aloud, "we are the strangest set of people at Mordaunt Hall that ever were born—that I have long believed; and as for Calantha, she's the strangest of any of us. To think of her absurdity in bringing up this poor child to be so superlatively delicate about money, that he refuses what there is not a schoolboy in the land but would jump at. Nay, my dear," she added, half offended, after one more attempt to press the gold upon him, "I wish you may always find guineas as little worth having. I suppose you've been brought up to think if you've a cat like Whittington, you'll some time or other be lord-mayor of London; but I advise you, in the meantime, to get all the money you honestly can, and not to be too proud to be tipped."

“ I am afraid you *are* very proud,” she continued, putting her hand under his chin, and lifting up a now rather surly countenance; “but you are a good boy, nevertheless,” she added, recovering her good-humour; “and you are as cold as ice. There, run into the house the back way, and I’ll go and tell Alice to put you to bed, and get you something warm; and as you are too grand to take the guinea, you shall come down to desert instead. Off with you, Gideon!”

By this time they had reached the house, and they parted; he to the back-door, and she to the front, from which she made her way up-stairs.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ ‘To arms! to arms!’ the bright Virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties” . . .

Rape of the Lock.

“ I THOUGHT I might safely trust you,” said Mrs. Chandos, addressing her husband on entering her nursery. “ You’re much fitter to faddle over a baby than I am. Well, little Kit — your eyes are as bright and wicked as ever, I see. What a naughty child you were to go tumbling into the river! Mr. Chandos, what a capital nursery-maid you *do* make—only the child’s night-cap’s on wrong side before! Did you put it on yourself?”

He had carried his child in his arms to the house with sensations so utterly overwhelming

that he had not spoken a word. With all the greediness of passion over its object thus restored, he had, indeed, refused to surrender his child to the nursemaid; he had kept her upon his lap whilst her clothes were changed; he had himself tied on the little night-cap; had himself held her wrapped up in a shawl, and warming her in his bosom while her bed was made hot; had laid her in it; arranged her tiny pillow—everything—with an intensity of feeling which left no room for reflection, and he now sat by her, with all the seriousness—the almost melancholy, of *profound* joy upon his countenance.

She lay in her bed, her little bright, glistening eyes fixed upon his face; and by that mysterious sympathy which united them, seeming to share his feelings, though it was impossible she should understand them.

He had been too entirely overcome to be able, as was his custom, to meet his wife's attacks with good-humoured raillery; he made no answer to what she said, but looking up at her, tried to smile, and felt that their hearts were more congenial than ever.

Lucilla, it must be confessed, was usually extremely good-humoured, — she had too much levity to be easily vexed ; but nothing tried her so much as silence. When she got no answer from Mr. Chandos, she always felt it as a mark of secret contempt, and she thought it her right to feel contempt for *him* — not his for *her*.

Anything the least approaching to contempt as directed to herself she felt to be the utmost possible injustice — and no one can easily endure injustice ; so she went on, with a little more sarcasm in her tone, —

“ While you were busy dressing the child and playing Susan’s part, I loitered a little behind to perform what was properly yours—to thank the child who had half drowned himself to save her. Though he was but a boy — and a poor boy — I thought somebody might have, at least, the grace to do that, so I offered him a guinea.”

“ You didn’t?”

“ But I did. I don’t *quite* lose my presence of mind. However, the boy’s a curious boy — he wouldn’t take it ; the first of his sex that ever I

met with who refused to be paid for anything when they could get paid. There's a difference between him and some people I know, however; for to accept a service without offering an acknowledgment is not exactly the same as refusing an acknowledgment after doing a service."

"Your reproof is just, Lucilla. I had no presence of mind—I forgot every thing," said Mr. Chandos, gently. "But who is this poor boy who refuses money which he has so justly earned?"

"Why, who do you think? Do you remember the child little Kit was so good-natured to ages ago, when we were all assembled in full committee here, years and years since. I never thought much about him from that time to this; but he went on living with Calantha, it seems, and has been in the house all this time, and not allowed to come down and make one among the children. I do think the pride of Emma and Julia is insupportable. I can't think what they take themselves for?" said the beautiful Mrs. Chandos, who, from the height of her husband's ancient descent and highly aristocratical position in so-

ciety, looked down with a little disdain upon the somewhat *nouveaux riches* who had married her sisters.

“I can’t think what right *they* have to look down upon people.”

“As much as any body else has, I suppose,” said her husband, quietly.

“And why Gideon is not good enough to be a playfellow for *their* children, forsooth! Absurd prejudice! But I’ll set them right about it.”

“I don’t think the prejudice quite so absurd as you seem to do,” said Mr. Chandos, quietly; “and I wish, Lucilla, you would let your sisters manage their families in their own way. Depend upon it, you will not make this boy acceptable in their sight by taking up the cudgels for him in your usual enthusiastic way. It is the most difficult thing in the world to decide what is right—still more what is kindest to be done by children in his perplexing situation.”

“Well,” said she, provoked, “I believe there is not one thing in the world that I could do or say that you would not contradict me in. I

wonder how you would treat me, or what you would think of me, if I were to nourish this barbarous, hard-hearted, abominable system of heartless pride and exclusion. Is it the boy's fault that he is a foundling?—the boy's fault if he be the child of shame?—the boy's fault that he has no position in society—no place, no home? And I verily believe, except myself, not one true and warm friend in the world."

"My dear Lucilla, how you run on! How you confound ideas, and mistake intentions and meanings!"

"Mistake! I am so very likely to mistake! Oh! I have no discernment into character—no faculty of comprehension—no penetration into things! Oh, no! I can't see the least into a millstone. I don't understand the world a bit—oh dear, no! I quite misunderstand my own sisters all this time, when I think them most wickedly insolent and hard-hearted to this poor unfortunate; they're only doing what's *kindest*—soft-hearted creatures!"

Mr. Chandos was again silent; he had been

long wearied out of the attempt to reason—his spirits were speedily overwhelmed with these torrents of words.

He turned to Kitty, and shifted her pillow a little.

The child lay there, her little sprite-like eyes wandering from one parent's face to another; they were both of them too much in the habit of forgetting she was present upon these occasions.

“To me,” Lucilla went on, “there is not a situation upon earth so truly pathetic as that of a natural child; and the atrocious injustice of society heaps injury on injury upon the afflicted head; but a foundling besides!—not one single natural relation in the world; exposed to the contempt and indifference of all the heartless wretches with which this world is peopled; with no defined place, no admitted rank; dependent for every morsel he puts into his mouth, and every thread that covers his back, upon the cold, reluctant hand of mere charity! Oh, it is horrid!” and the tears, forced into her eyes by her vehemence, now stood in them. “And I hate them all about it—even my father is not quite just—and as for

Calantha, I have no patience with her ; she ought to *insist* upon the poor boy being treated properly. She ought to quarrel with them all rather than suffer this defenceless creature to be trampled upon. To undertake to bring up a child, and then do it in this half-and-half, indifferent manner ! But I always thought Calantha, with all her gentleness, wanted *heart*."

The chest of Mr. Chandos might, if a very attentive observer had watched him, have been just seen to rise under the breast of his coat ; it sank again without, as it would appear, the breath of a sigh being uttered.

After a pause, in which Lucilla took breath, and while her bright eyes were turned to the little Kitty again, the colour which had risen to her face, and which rendered her supremely beautiful, began gently to subside.

Mr. Chandos said, " I honour your warmth in such a cause, but I think you are unjust to Calantha."

" Well, I dare say I may be, poor darling thing !" said she, recovering her temper. " People have such different ways of looking at things, one

can't wonder. I can only say, that if *I* were in her place I'd soon see this matter set to rights; and though I ain't in her place, I will;—but she and I are so different.”

Lucilla stood upright in the breakfast parlour, her attitude all spirit and determination, her colour again raised, and her eyes flashing, declaiming to her sisters who were sitting there.

Mrs. Archer was knotting at the window. Mrs. Bedingfield at the writing-table, her head lifted up, and pen in her hand, listening to her. Mrs. Ernest was regarding her with the most sympathising admiration; Calantha lying upon her couch, her eyes fixed upon her sister, contemplating her with a mixed expression of doubt, anxiety, pleasure, and alarm.

Mr. Bedingfield, with his book upon his knees, looked up; and Ernest, standing in the threshold of a front window which opened into the garden, glanced from time to time, with a look

half amused, half sarcastic, at his sisters, and whistled under his breath to himself.

“ I don’t care in the least what you say—I repeat—it’s scandalous! The boy has saved the child’s life at the risk of his own ——”

Mrs. Archer looked up and smiled slightly, as much as to say, “ How you *do* represent things !”

“ I wonder when all your fine Eton and Harrow young gentlemen would do as much. I shall be glad to see Arthur and Algernon, or Shafto, or Percy, or Mahultus, wetting their fine coats to save my little girl’s life—very glad indeed! and when they do I’ll be grateful to them. But here’s the child that flung himself into the deepest pool in the river, and saved her at the peril of drowning,—and he’s not to be fit company for all your fine gentlemen!—but he *shall*! I’ve a voice in this house, I hope, as well as any of you, and I’ll make it heard.”

“ That you will,” said Mrs. Archer, in an under tone.

“ And I’ll speak to my father myself, Calantha, if you won’t. And if the drawing-room’s too good

for Gideon, it's too good for Kitty and me. I'm rather grateful, if nobody else is, to the brave boy who saved my child's life."

"How you do talk, Lucilla!" at last Mrs. Archer said. "You are so fond of making mountains of molehills. Drowning! Whoever thought of the danger of drowning in *that* brook? Why the water's not two inches deep. There's not water enough in it to drown a blind kitten. Is there, Ernest?"

"I think one might contrive that," said Ernest, "in one or two of the deepest pools; but there is certainly no place so deep that a child could be easily drowned in it in the middle of June: but though I believe Kitty quite clever enough to have scrambled out herself—give her a little time—I think it was a noble thing of a boy of his age to plunge in without the least hesitation into that dangerous-looking place to save her; and I vote him accordingly a crown of parsley-leaves—but as to offering him the honour of an ovation, and admitting him in future, upon equal terms with the rest, into the high precincts of the drawing-room—as the Chancellor says—I doubt—and

I am the more disinterested in my doubts, as my sole hope being yet in his long frocks, I anticipate, as far as I am concerned, no immediate danger to him from his association with a boy of questionable parentage."

How lightly spoke a sensible and not ill-natured man upon concerns so interesting and important, possibly, as regarded the ultimate fate, and certainly as regarded the present happiness, of a human being,—but then that human being was but in his eyes a poor base-born child.

I do not intend to say he was altogether wrong, or his doubts as to the advisableness of admitting this boy to terms of equality with the others unfounded. It is a truth too evident that the vices and errors of his parents had twisted, as it were, one dark thread into Gideon's life, which would shew itself whichever way the web was woven. He had received an inheritance of evil which mingled with every circumstance, rendered the most favourable hazardous, the unfavourable doubly injurious. The very enthusiasm he inspired in the ardent temper of Lucilla, the anxious, nervous desire for his happiness on the part

of Calantha, the wish to limit herself within the rules of justice and prudence upon that of Mrs. Mordaunt—all equally, with the pride, and cold-heartedness, and maternal jealousies of the others, militated against him.

“Doubt! Whoever heard Ernest do anything but doubt,” cried Lucilla, scornfully, “when any action, not prompted by the most cold-blooded calculation, was in question?”

Mrs. Ernest did not like this, and wished the unfortunate subject of the dispute were anywhere in the world but where he was, and that Lucilla would be quiet.

“I am sure Ernest,” she began, “is ——”

“Perfect, of course,” cried Lucilla. “Oh, yes! —such a *sensible* man! . . . Very well; I see you are all against me; but he comes down into the drawing-room this night—see if he don’t, —for I am not very much accustomed to be baffled when I have set my heart upon a thing, and when I am quite sure I am right.”

“Which you always are.”

“Don’t, dear Ernest.”

“Come along, child. Why should we bother ourselves?” and he put his wife’s arm under his, leaving Lucilla so far mistress of the field.

She could defy every one but Ernest, her husband included, who, to tell the truth, seemed upon this occasion not to be influenced by his usual liberality of sentiment—his kindness and good-nature. Was it a vague foreboding of evil?—a shadow that too often darkened his features, sicklying them over with the pale cast of thought?

Was it that the excessive delicacy and susceptibility of his nature shrank from too close association with what he looked upon as base-born?

It is certain he did not seem inclined to regard the benefit he had received in the light Lucilla chose to do; he, like the rest of the family, refused to believe that either of the children had been in any real danger.

Even now he shuddered so at the recollection—the idea of the possibility of his child having been

drowned even now that all danger was over, was so exquisitely painful to him, that he was glad to accept this lighter view of the subject; and he, good as he was, through this very excess of feeling, did some injustice to the brave boy who had rushed to the rescue.

At the same time, not Lucilla herself was more anxious to recompense him; and he reflected seriously upon the manner in which he should most effectually do this.

He doubted the kindness of accustoming Gideon to consider himself upon an equality with those by whom he was well aware, as years advanced, and exclusion became more painful, that equality would never be admitted; but having seen and conversed with the child, he at once confessed, in spite of rough brown hands and a sun-burnt face, that he was of a nature far superior to the common run of mankind,—that he was one to whom a liberal education, and a place among the educated classes, might be considered almost the necessary condition of happy existence, and he immediately tendered to Ca-

lantha the free use of his purse in aid of any plan that she might think best for his advantage.

They talked of educating him to take Orders, and Mr. Chandos promised to provide him with a small living.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,
 The victory is mine!"

Rape of the Lock.

LUCILLA triumphed as usual in all she undertook.

She soon talked her father over.

What in Calantha had been romantic exaggeration, in Lucilla was a charming generosity and enthusiasm, which carried her perhaps, sometimes beyond the limits of prudence, but was the result of a heart too warm to be resisted.

Kitty and Gideon came down to dessert hand in hand. A change might have been observed upon Mr. Chandos's countenance as thus they entered the dining-room. He called his little girl hastily to

him, and placed her, as usual, upon his knee; Lucilla, at the opposite side of the table, lavished sweetmeats, cakes, and caresses, upon Gideon.

She, quick and observing, had detected that change, which to no one else had been apparent, upon her husband's countenance. She despised him for his pride and ingratitude, and enhanced upon her demonstrations of kindness in order to shew him that she did.

She even called to her little girl to come to her round the table, but he held her tighter than usual, even with him, that day, and saying, —

“No, no—Kitty belongs to me at dessert,” would not let her go.

“Take that pretty sugar strawberry to Kitty, Gideon,” said Lucilla, resolved not to yield to her husband's nonsense.

Gideon, who felt excessively shy and uncomfortable all this time, hesitated.

“Can't you throw it across the table?” said Mr. Chandos, holding out his hand; “Catch—Kitty!”

But what could he do? When he came into the drawing-room to tea, the two children were sitting at a little table apart, and Lucilla stand-over them, teaching them to play at beggar-my-neighbour. As none of the other children would take any notice of her favourite, she was resolved Kitty should prove a noble exception to the rest. And Kitty was looking supremely happy, holding her cards for the first time in her life, and playing with Gideon, of whom she felt excessively fond.

It was too preposterous—too utterly absurd, to make any serious objection to this intimacy between children of their years, so Mr. Chandos felt—so preposterous that it was impossible to interfere; but as he sat reading, or, at least, pretending to read, at a table at no great distance, his face thrown into shade by the lamp standing behind him, and as he watched her animated little face and figure, perched, in her little white short frock, upon a high chair, those pretty rounded arms, bare to the shoulders, where the tiny sleeves were tied up with blue ribands—stretched eagerly out in her play, her most sweet and inno-

cent face and laughing eyes lighted up with glee and pleasure—as he saw Lucilla busy teaching them and encouraging the intimacy which evidently afforded such high enjoyment to both, he every now and then drew out his watch, and thought Susan never would come to fetch his child to bed. The quick eye of Lucilla again detected the fidget he was in.

You may guess how exquisitely sensible of the ridicule of such feelings she was. She had on many occasions before felt the utmost contempt for his understanding, or rather for his character, when she detected in him feelings, as she thought, so utterly nonsensical and exaggerated. She could not think him a silly, but she dared to think him a very soft man, and her high opinion of her own abilities and energies was increased by the contrast.

She delighted now in punishing his weakness by encouraging, in every way, the enjoyment of the children, and at last, in the mere spirit of provoking contradiction to which she had worked herself up, she proposed, when Susan at last made her appearance, that Kitty, who had kissed

the company round as she bade them good-night, should kiss Gideon too, because he had saved her life that morning. But as the little innocent child, stretching out her pretty arms, was about to comply, Mr. Chandos started up, snatched her up, and saying, somewhat haughtily, "I'll carry Miss Chandos to bed," walked, with her in his arms, out of the room. Upon which the company, one and all, fell a-laughing, and Gideon slunk down under the table.

They all, men, women, and children, after that, sat down to a round game, so he was able to creep away unobserved to bed.

Child he was, but a passionate, most imaginative, feeling child. He did not go to sleep.

He lay in a sort of exquisite dream, the events of the day passing before him with a vividness like reality. He saw the sweet child, as he had watched her from the thicket, in her little pink frock, dabbled to the knees, her tippet all awry, and bonnet on one side, tripping about with her tiny feet over the rough heaps that surrounded her port; he heard her scream of horror when all her fleet of golden, scarlet, and purple

leaves was borne in the torrent away ; and he dwelt with something like rapture upon the look of unfeigned surprise and ecstasy which she threw up at him as he put the pretty walnut-shell boat he had prepared into her hand.

He saw her standing there, toppling upon that high bit of sand-stone ; he felt his heart beating as if it would burst with terror. She is gone ! The blood rushes to his head, his eyes are dim, his ears tingle, but he feels himself plunging into the water, and he knows that it is he, and he only, who has saved her.

He had heard no discussions upon the subject, — to him the pool had appeared awfully deep ; but he had saved her, and no conqueror of battle-field ever felt so proud and exulting as he.

Then he saw Alice dressing him all in his best, and kissing him, and saying, “ He was to go to dessert, he had been such a good boy ; ” and then the door opens, and Susan appears with Kitty in her hand, looking, oh, so sweet and pretty ! and holding out that little hand, and saying, “ Come with me—we’re to go down to dessert ; ” and again his head seems to swim. And then he is

in the dining-room, and it is all so beautiful! That grand thing full of wax-candles over the dining-table, and all the shining glass and china, and heaps of beautiful fruits and things; and he standing close by Mrs. Chandos, and she being so very good to him, and little Kitty opposite, upon her father's lap, prattling so prettily, but every now and then turning round, and giving him a friendly, encouraging smile and nod.

And, then, the game at cards!—oh, that game at cards! Poor child!—poor boy! So exquisitely tempered, capable of such warm and generous affections, alas! of such *agonies* of admiration—worthily endowed by nature to achieve that prize so incomparably precious, alas! by the crime of others for ever blighted.

He had been melancholy, solitary, wounded in all the honest pride of his little heart, by the neglect with which he had been treated; but that was all over now.

Happily unconscious of the extent and complication of the evils to which his unhappy destiny exposed him, though often acutely suffering from

the individual instances of their power, he lay there in a dream of childish happiness, excited to a degree which, perhaps, none but such a child can be ; and he only dropped asleep, and his thoughts composed at last, while he planned new schemes for making playthings for his Kitty.

Lucilla persisted, for the others still opposed.

She was indefatigable as long as a victory over opposition was to be achieved. Her husband well knew this, and said nothing more ; her sisters, less wary, or having less command over themselves, continued the contention, and visited their ill-humour most unjustly upon the innocent object of all this quarrelling.

Lucilla was the more determined to maintain her point the more the others attempted to dispute it. She thought this contest in the cause of the oppressed a thing most noble and glorious, and despised in her heart the apparently neuter, namely, Calantha, Ernest, and Mr. Chandos ; Mrs. Ernest was quite upon her side.

She had always gloried in shewing the difference between her way of bringing up her child and that of her sisters. Because they were fond of dressing their children fine, she would never suffer Kitty to wear any thing but the plainest muslin frocks; because their little girls' hair was tied up, and plaited, and curled, and bedizened with ribands, Kitty wore a little simple crop, the curls were of Nature's own arranging—they would come, and were too pretty even for Lucilla to sacrifice to her whim; and now, because the other sisters still contrived that their children should keep Gideon at a certain distance, she taught Kitty to treat him, and treated him herself, upon terms of perfect equality.

The Chandoses remained, however, but a fortnight at Mordaunt Hall. Then they took their departure, the rest followed, and every thing resumed its usual course.

The contest over, Gideon sank at once into his accustomed insignificance. He was no longer admitted into the drawing-room, or allowed the delightful privilege of coming down to dessert. Lucilla gone, her influence expired. Mr. Mor-

daunt, no longer subjugated by the charms of her countenance and of that voice, to him the sweetest and gayest thing in the world, returned to his old dislikes, and Calantha to her old precautions, and to her care to keep Gideon as much out of sight as possible.

But they were neither of them unhappy upon this account.

They became inseparable companions. The weather being warm and beautiful, Calantha, whose powers of motion seemed to diminish yearly, was able to be wheeled out-of-doors upon a couch constructed for the purpose, and Gideon was but too happy to be allowed to help to draw her along. They used to go into the wood-walks together, and she would order her couch to be placed under some one or other of his favourite trees, in some glade or opening in the woods, where they could command a view over the blue and beautiful distance, or where, at least, surrounded by the copses and thickets, space enough was left to admit the face of the deep azure summer sky, with the white clouds resting within its depths.

He used to sit there, perched upon one end of her sofa, ever happy to be with her. Sometimes he read to her; sometimes she to him. The tales of giants and knights had given place to the histories of brave and great men — of great men who, with courage and perseverance, had opposed the tide of adverse circumstances which surrounded them — had greatly struggled — greatly suffered — greatly conquered — or greatly died.

She endeavoured even thus early to teach him that life was a battle-field — that the Church of Christ was militant on earth — and already to arm her young soldier with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation for the strife, which she felt would be so bitter a one to him.

Only upon the eve of completing his tenth year, it may surprise those who have had little opportunity for observing the workings of the heart in children of that age, how the spirit within responded to the noble enthusiasm she endeavoured to inspire — with what strenuous aspirations — what ardent desire of good — what honest determination to do well — that little breast was filled !

Then they would enjoy the peace they both so much loved—the peace of nature together. He would roam among the thickets in pursuit of adventures among that living world of birds and insects, to him so interesting and delightful; and if he saw a lark slowly careering in the transparent air; a blue kingfisher glancing along the sparkling brook, which ran half buried in the thickets, as I have described it, at no great distance; or returned with a beautiful blue or rainbow dragon-fly, a green grasshopper, or a peacock butterfly in his handkerchief, to shew it to Calantha, and set it free by her side; it was all pure, unmixed delight.

While she, softly reposing in that spirit of resignation and submission to the almighty will of the living God, which she had, after so many struggles and efforts, attained,—at peace within, enjoying that full measure of internal serenity which perhaps none but those who have thus triumphed over suffering fully know, seemed almost to have a foretaste of the heaven to which she was approaching in these hours of quiet enjoyment.

But the weeks rolled rapidly away, and they must part. She returned to her solitary life, and he was plunged once more into all the storms, the struggles, the exertions, the sufferings, and the scanty, but exquisite, delights, which were, even in Mr. Singletrees' academy, to be found under the rule of Mr. Prior.

CHAPTER XV.

“ . . . The impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart, which Nature
Furnishes to every creature.”

WORDSWORTH.

AT Mr. Singletrees' he had continued to remain.
He is now nearly sixteen.

He is come to the age when the boy is surrendered to himself, when the soul of man is placed in his own keeping.

The happy days of childish dependence—the confiding trust—the unquestioning obedience—the responsibility cast upon others, end; and the great truth is borne in upon the mind, that by his own conduct, and by his own conduct alone, the man must stand or fall.

The higher reason has now awakened, and the

mind becomes capable of comprehending and taking interest in those divine abstractions with which the reason, the heavenly wisdom, has to do.

Duty—sin—life—death—the world—the power of evil—responsibility—time—eternity—the words become instinct with new and deeper meanings.

Nature—beauty—ideal form—history—poetry—find new voices by which to speak to the soul.

While the pure abstractions of science—till then all hateful confusion to the mind—become invested with light, and replete with their own peculiar beauty.

Then first the boy begins really to taste of all these things, then first they really enter his soul, and become part of himself.

Then first, perhaps, the young aspirant is attracted forward by that which lies before him, instead of being driven on by the dread of others; the love of knowledge, the appetite for truth, the thirst for a generous distinction, take the place of the fear of punishment or the hope of an adventitious reward; he cares more for what he has acquired than for the prizes he has earned, is more anxious to advance than to have others

mark his advancement, and labours with cheerfulness and energy, because he is now first thoroughly convinced that his own labour alone can really avail him.

He becomes often thoughtful, sometimes deeply melancholy—generally reserved—often unamiable—while he is thus employed—thus awakened to this new day, and endeavouring to arrange himself in accordance with the objects which this dawn of reason has suddenly disclosed.

The day-dawn broke upon the hapless boy, to disclose monsters and spectres peculiar to his own prospects, and which the happy carelessness of childhood had hidden from his view. It is very true that he had often suffered, and acutely, from shame and rage, when his position was suddenly brought before him by the curiosity or by the ill-nature of others; but such sufferings were transient—they left no sting behind; they were passed over and forgotten; the heart was too young and warm to harbour resentment; the spirit too brave and buoyant to dwell upon mortification.

But now he began to think.

Criminal father!—faithless mother!

Yet sinful, hard-hearted, absorbed in schemes of selfish ambition, as was that father, still he was a man; and had that strong imagination with which he was gifted been once directed that way,—had he once seriously considered the fate that waits upon a forsaken child, he would have shuddered. But what would his feelings at this moment have been, had he known that the treasure he would have given at this present moment worlds to possess—that a son gifted like this had been his—was his own—and that he had thrown it away!

With what ecstasy would he have devoted the greater part of his large fortune to the development of a mind such as this!

With what pride and exultation have looked upon him, and pointed him out to others, as the heir of those high honours which his own energy and great talents had acquired!

Rare gift to any man is such a boy as this; most rare the happiness, when a father, who has justly acquired for himself a marked place in the world, who has achieved greatness in his gene-

ration, is blessed with a son so worthy and so competent to succeed him.

It had been the most passionate desire of Ridley's heart to possess such a son.

He did possess such an one, and he had flung the treasure, like a worthless weed, away.

He had two sons, it is true, by his unblest marriage with the Lady Angelina; but what hopes could the aspiring and highly-gifted man build upon two such youths as they proved to be?

In their childhood they had been abandoned, by a cold-hearted mother and an ambitious, busily occupied father, to the chances of the nursery and the stable.

Little boys, they had been sent unprepared to school to take their chance.

Much too soon they had been passed on to Eton.

They had followed the routine of education, but they had profited nothing. They had done worse; they had acquired all that was to be learnt of bad, and imbibed little of the good, which the miniature world of a public school affords.

They were proud, lazy, and luxurious,—addicted to vices above their age,—to gambling, swearing, drinking, and smoking. So that they were well-dressed and well-mannered their mother was content. She was far too completely heartless herself—much too entirely occupied in the strenuous idleness of a life of fashion, to have time to give any serious attention to the education of her children.

They lost, however, not much by this neglect upon her part, *par parenthèse*, be it said, for she was empty, head and heart, and had little good influence in her power to bestow.

Their father had been somewhat different, though he never took the pains to secure that which he so exceedingly desired—their progress in study. He was too busy for that; but he paid for them at the best schools, and provided them tutors when at home; yet as no good foundation in childhood had been laid, they would do, and did nothing.

When he discovered how utterly wasted was all the expense he had been at, and even, in a certain sense, pains that he had been at, his anger

was as excessive as his disappointment was unreasonable.

His sons had always been afraid of him—his eagle eye, his severe countenance, his lofty distant manner, his stern voice, had terrified them as babies, and awed them as little boys. His haughty disdain, his taunts, his threats, alienated them as great boys; and that sad, secret warfare began of deceit upon one side and severity upon the other, which, alas! is going on in so many, many families.

The boys were heartless creatures at best; the empty, cold, inane character of the mother, seemed to have triumphed over their inheritance of talent and energy derived from their father. Unblest union,—unblest fruits! Yet who shall say what a careful education might have done in eradicating what was bad, and developing what was to be found of good, in their dispositions? There is always something to be developed.

Who shall say what might have been the result of a different course?

Questions we vainly ask when such miserable

results of an education under “every possible advantage” are presented to us.

I think, I hope, and I believe, that there are fewer examples of such miserable results to be met with in our day than there were in Ridley’s; but there are disappointed parents—far too many still—who have not been careless, and careless parents, too many who deserve to be disappointed. The prospect of what remains to be done in all ways would be disheartening, could we not look back with well-founded triumph upon what has been effected.

The poor betrayed mother, now slumbering in the churchyard of Ripley-cum-Mordaunt, had been alike faithless to her trust. How dared she—how could she find heart to abandon the poor, helpless innocent to all the buffets of this world!—to all its temptations, degradations, follies, sins, crimes, unshielded by the love of one single heart, to which it was instinctively dear! Had Calantha, had Mr. Prior, been as indifferent to duty, as insensible to pity—had they not found in their Christian piety and love sufficient to supply what was wanting to the performance of a

duty cast upon them by the indifference of others—one shudders to think what the fate of such a child might have been.

He had this half-year laboured, under Mr. Prior's guidance, with a spirit and energy which he had never shewn before; the good, industrious little boy had expanded into the strenuous, aspiring youth.

And in his progress, but still more in the rare excellencies of his heart, his strength of principle, and loftiness of purpose, did that wise, and conscientious, and disinterested master, reap a rich reward for what he had done.

Gideon repaid the affection of Mr. Prior with the most devoted attachment, and now, awakened to that self-consciousness at which we review and take account of what has been done for us, he repaid his pains and efforts with a deeper and still more unbounded gratitude.

Much he could not do, poor fellow! in the way of giving positive proofs of what he felt, but

what he could do he did. Every farthing of pocket-money that was given to him was carefully hoarded to be laid out in little comforts for Mr. Prior's mother and sister, the unfortunate situation of the latter being a source of continued expense, which kept the good usher and his mother very poor.

The good old lady would hesitate and refuse when these little offerings were made, but Mr. Prior received them frankly, with many thanks, and an open expression of the pleasure it was to him when his mother's scanty comforts were added to. He loved to see the boy in the exercise, upon his side, of the benevolent affections, doing good and conferring kindness; he knew that nothing blights the human heart like always being the one to receive, and never to return.

Gideon, in Mr. Prior's family, enjoyed the inestimable advantage, to one in a condition so depressing as his, of being and feeling himself upon terms of equality; of being loved, and of his love being of equal value in return; and of helping and assisting, on his side, those who had been of such inestimable service to him.

To his unspeakable advantage, it happened, too, that Mr. Singletrees, prospering in his school under the advantage of having such an usher as Mr. Prior, promoted that gentleman to the teaching of the upper forms, procuring another usher for the lower ones, so that Gideon continued under his jurisdiction. He had in these things his full share of those happy accidents which every one meets with in the course of their career, but which few know how to seize by the forelock.

CHAPTER XVI.

“'Twas a love that strangely gather'd strength thro' every
change of season,
That strangely grew to weave itself at last thro' every
thought.”

C. W. BENNETT.

HE had not met the little friend of his childhood for five years, but he had not forgotten her nor she him.

Whenever she came to Mordaunt Hall during this time, he had been absent at school, but she had never failed to inquire after him, and Alice, who was become excessively proud of her charge, told her what a good, clever, and loving boy he was. She took the greatest pleasure in hearing him praised, for she was very much interested in him as an orphan boy, who had only his own

exertions to depend upon in the world. For she, adored by and adoring her father, and living upon the happiest possible terms with her mother, thought that to be an orphan must be the greatest misfortune that could happen to any one, and would have found this cause enough for the interest and pity she felt.

But she had not forgotten the boy who had drawn her out of the water, and who, during the fortnight afterwards had been allowed to shew her such unwearied devotion. She was very young, but the impression had remained permanent.

It was Christmas now, and the Chandoses were to spend it at the Hall. Calantha, as far as lay in her power, had contrived that Gideon should be absent at the times of the family meetings; he was of an age now to suffer so much from the proscription to which she knew he would be exposed, that she could not bear to subject him to it.

When these meetings happened in the holidays, taking advantage of the means afforded by Mr. Chandos's liberality, she used to board him

at Mr. Prior's, much to the satisfaction of every party concerned but herself.

But now, after Mr. Chandos had taken so kind an interest in his fate, she began to think that he, no longer a mere school-boy, should be again introduced to his notice ; for, whenever Mr. Chandos had been down at Mordaunt Hall, he, like his little daughter, had revived the subject, and had appeared to enter with much interest into Calantha's plans for his provision in life.

The Church still appeared to them both his proper destination. In deciding upon which, it is true, like many others, they studied rather the advantage which that benignant mother holds out to those who, with no worldly claim to the dignity of serving her, devote themselves to this service, than any peculiar indication or vocation upon the part of the boy for the sacred calling.

It seemed so secure a shelter for him from all the difficulties of his position. As a clergyman, he was at once admitted among people of education upon terms of equality ; no pedigree, no advantages of blood or station, were necessary

here ; Mr. Chandos promised to bestow upon him a small living in his gift, and to pay the expenses of his university education, and thus he would be provided for and safe.

Gratitude for the service he had done his child, but far more the most sincere admiration of Calantha's generous exertions, and compassion for the difficulties and obstructions she had met with in carrying out her undertaking, were the motives which led to this liberal conduct on the part of Mr. Chandos, who, indeed, had fortune ample and to spare.

He had no child but his daughter, and he had settled his large estates upon her. He was a man of too sensitive a character to take pleasure in much general association with the world, so that his expenses were small in proportion to his income. His sole object in life seemed to be the education of his daughter, to which he devoted all the powers of his most accomplished mind. He seemed to live for her : for her he travelled—for her he read—for her sake he encouraged Lucilla to keep up that communication with

society which she loved, and an introduction to which, in a position so high as that which his Kitty was born to occupy, he knew to be indispensable to propriety.

Lucilla, light-hearted, animated, clever, and determined as ever, carried on these things in her own way. The parts, indeed, of husband and wife seemed reversed. She lived for the external, he for the internal life. The internal life was that alone which would afford any interest to him. Disappointed in the object of an almost mad idolatry—disenchanted and awakened when that phantom of delight became inseparably his own, and proved herself, in the everyday life, so entirely wanting in all that he prized above measure in woman, his heart had closed upon himself, until once more called to feeling and life by the claims of his little daughter.

From the time Kitty was eighteen months old, or earlier, this little enchanting creature had laid hold of his heart, and from that hour to his dying day he loved her with that rare strength of passion which arises when those, united by the tender ties of family affection, find in each other

those sympathies and graces which would have attracted them in preference to all the world.

Lucilla cared far too little for her husband to be in the least degree jealous of this engrossing affection for his child; a happy indifference of temper shielded her, indeed, from most of the finer distresses or anxieties of life, and her never-failing good opinion of herself maintained in her so agreeable a self-complacency, that she was never haunted by those self-distrusts and jealousies which embitter the lives of the weak. Her opinion of her husband was, as we well know, not a very high one. She looked upon him with a disdainful sort of pity, mistaking his sensibility for weakness, his refinement for romance, his gentleness for cowardice, and his tender melancholy for hypochondria.

She loved Kitty with all her heart,—that is, with all the heart she had,—and Kitty loved her mother dearly. Mr. Chandos took good care her affections should never be distracted or disturbed by comparisons between them. She loved them both as she thought, entirely; but ah, in what a different way!

As she grew older,—as her mind, too, in its turn began to open to the true perception of things, the sort of sympathetic instinct which had bound her to her father began to find its reason in her heart, for she could not but observe and compare. She was a lovely, gifted creature herself, and capable of estimating the treasures which lay hid in such a character as her father's—

“Uncounted pearls—unvalued jewels!”

All the false glitter of her mother's temper was understood, too; but she was not, therefore, perplexed in her affections. Her sense of justice, and her heart of love, and her most pious child's conscience, were satisfied with what she gave to both.

Cheerful acquiescence, pleasant talk, ready obedience to her mother; and the deep affections of a heart earnest as his own to her father.

With what delight did she imbibe from him those lessons of wisdom and virtue which flowed so gently from his lips—with what exquisite

pleasure did her imagination expand, filled with all the ideal forms of good and beauty which his highly chastened taste presented !

With what pleasure, in his company, did she study all the noble creations of the master-minds of her country and of the world — unsphere the spirit of Plato — plunge into the depths of darkness, or soar into the empyrean with Dante — shudder with strange, awful horror over the old Greek tragedians — delight in the living creations of Homer, Tasso, Milton, Shakspeare, Schiller, — and the best French literature carefully selected, — together they had enjoyed them all.

I should say were enjoying them ; for it cannot be supposed that the delicate, ethereal-looking girl, not yet fourteen, with that air of sweetness, gaiety, simplicity, and tenderness, so charmingly mingled in her countenance and displayed in her delightful voice and manners, had been stuffed or overloaded with literature. All under this tender, gracious management had been imbibed so easily and so pleasantly, that her mind, enriched and adorned as it was, had preserved all the genial liberty of its unsophisticated action. She

was as charmingly unaffected and natural as it was possible for creature to be.

The father's happiness was unbounded. He gazed upon this lovely being, the creation at once of pure, beautiful nature, and of his own solicitous and judicious care, with a secret joy, which none but a parent, and such a parent, ever does or can know. None but a parent can conceive that inner sense of hidden, deep, grateful felicity, with which we contemplate this fair work of mysterious creation, adorned, and beautified, and rendered happy, by the results of exertions which are our own! And then, his satisfaction was enhanced, as it could not but be, by the sense that this treasure,—this delicate, delightful, transcendently lovely creature, was not to be exposed to the rough chances of the world, but was destined, through her family and fortune, to dignify one of the highest stations in society!

Any disagreeable ideas connected with Gideon had, of course, been dissipated long ago. They had been momentary, as they appeared unreasonable and absurd. Mr. Chandos, after the

children had once parted, never recurred to them again, and to none but the too jealous heart of the father had they ever occurred at all. So little did Gideon at present occupy his attention, so little did he look upon him as any thing but as an object of benevolence, that he thought no more of him in connexion with his daughter than he did of the page who waited behind her at dinner.

Nobody thought of suggesting a difficulty about the Christmas meeting. Calantha had no fear that with them Gideon would not be perfectly secure from those mortifications so injurious to a boy of his age and temper, which she had dreaded for him from the others. Lucilla had always kept up the interest she had at first professed for him. She had a mania for interfering wherever she went, and when once an idea had taken possession of her fancy, imagination, heart, head—whatever you please—in spite of her levity in other things, she clung to it as obstinately as she had adopted it rashly and without examination. It had been her pleasure, as I have said, to suppose in this case, as in many others where

Calantha was concerned, that the plans she carried out with so much good sense and moderation were the result of a cold, ungenerous, calculating temper; and whenever it chanced, as it often chanced, that others of the family coincided in her sister's view of a subject, this was more especially the case.

A little incipient jealousy of her sister's acknowledged judgment and ability, perhaps, lay at the bottom of this. Lucilla, who openly laid claim to superiority in this as in every other respect, was, without being herself, or perhaps any one else being, aware of it, influenced by a certain jealousy of any one who might be supposed to surpass her in those qualities to which she peculiarly laid claim.

Be this, however, as it may, it is certain that Lucilla constituted herself the imaginary guardian of Gideon's interests against the indifference and coldness, as she called it, of the others; while Calantha, quietly, patiently, and silently, laboured for his advantage, reflected much and seriously upon what would contribute most to his real good, refused herself the gratification of

many an endearing caress, of granting many an indulgence of her own taste or of the boy's inclinations, because she felt so strongly the duty and the kindness of accustoming him to self-denial and hardihood—of a sort of Spartan education, both of body and mind. Whilst she, therefore, dressed him with simplicity, accustomed him to spend little money, to learn to be content when debarred the many pleasures which others were allowed, sedulously teaching him the great lesson, in short, not to measure his own happiness by a comparison with what others enjoyed—while she bent the whole power of her mind to the rearing a brave, independent, cheerful spirit, neither enervated by luxury nor embarrassed with artificial wants and desires—Lucilla was sending him to school presents of cakes and sweetmeats much more magnificent than those usually sent to the other boys, articles of dress which rendered him the object of envious ridicule to his companions, and pocket-money enough to have been the source of temptation to any boy.

The evil effects of this generosity of spirit upon

which she prided herself were, however, greatly obviated by the peculiar relation in which Gideon stood with regard to Mr. Prior and his family. I have said that almost all his pocket-money was devoted to the procuring of little alleviations and comforts so conducive to the aged and delicate mother's care and comforts; whilst his cakes and sweetmeats were divided between his companions and the poor insane sister who manifested a childish passion for such things.

I have told you that Mr. Prior accepted these proofs of the boy's affection and gratitude, and upon what principle. He well knew, moreover, that the pains he had specially taken with him, and the time he had devoted to him, if counted into money, would have amounted to more than fifty times the sum.

Gideon had, therefore, escaped the pernicious effects of this, Lucilla's somewhat ill-judged generosity, and had remained as simple in his habits, as contented with little pleasures and little things as ever. Nor must he be thought ungrateful, if, though very much obliged to Mrs. Chandos for all this kindness, his heart

stood firm in its allegiance to Mr. Prior and Calantha.

Lucilla, however, like many other people, and especially people of her kind, always felt very fond of those she had *obliged*.

I am not inclined, in general, to think ill of human nature, but this partiality for those we have served seems to me a feeling of a very questionable origin, and one which people ought to regard with some jealousy in themselves, lest it have a root of pride in it. If they find themselves less inclined to love those who have obliged *them*, let them be upon their guard.

Lucilla, moreover, being particularly inclined to entertain this sort of partiality to those she had constituted her *protégés*, was quite prepared to make a favourite of Gideon; and this inclination was certainly increased by the conviction that her husband disapproved of this sort of *protégéship* (excuse the awkward word) and favouritism in general, and was always inclined to look somewhat coolly upon those it was her pleasure to elevate by this species of idolatry. This might arise on his part from a

wise desire to moderate what she exaggerated ; but there might be a little spirit of contradiction on his side. Whether or not, it is certain it aroused the spirit of contradiction upon hers, and she triumphed in pushing these demonstrations of her benevolent ardour as far as she possibly could, to shew that she was not to be chilled in her enthusiasm, or checked in what she judged right, by his cold, icy temper, and narrow views.

The subject of what and how much should be done for Gideon had, of course, been often discussed ; but lately it had been dropped, for Mr. Chandos having fixed in his own mind the limits within which he intended to confine his liberality, Lucilla was left to declaim upon the subject as much as she pleased, till, wearied of talking without being contradicted, she ended by contenting herself with sending him two guineas at a time, where before she had only sent one, because Mr. Chandos had expressed his opinion unequivocally in favour of Calantha's self-denying system of education.

They are arrived.

Gideon is now always allowed to appear in the drawing-room and to dine at table when the family are by themselves. Mr. Mordaunt will not hear at present of his being introduced when there is company, and it is very doubtful whether he ever will allow him the privilege. Right or wrong, he, at least, was resolved the boy should be kept in his place, which place was, according to his ideas, that in his day usually allotted to the family tutor—one who was only to speak when spoken to, and drink one glass of wine (the drinking a great many too many glasses being the especial privilege of a gentleman), and to retire from the table immediately after the ladies, it being, moreover, understood that when there was a dinner-party he was not to appear at all.

Such was Mr. Mordaunt's somewhat undefined notion of the place Gideon ought to occupy; now that his destination for the Church rendered it impossible to exclude him altogether from the drawing-room.

The boy, however, was yet of an age when

such little rules were not subject of either pain or mortification. A boy of sixteen, even if a member of the family, was at that time of day subjected much to the same system of exclusion, and was not any the worse for it, probably. It was with a beating heart, vibrating between pleasure and nervous anxiety, that Gideon heard, from his little room where he sat busily engaged over a comfortable blazing fire, the carriages grinding over the snow that now lay in heaps in the stable-yard, and upon the roofs of the different servants' offices which his little window commanded.

He could pay attention to the classic before him no longer. His imagination took the reins and started away with him far, far, from the present scene.

Long as had been the separation between them, the letters and presents of Lucilla had kept up the communication with the Chandos family, and had perpetually revived the recollection of that one blissful fortnight of his life, when he in his turn had been a person of importance, and, by her at least, a petted and

admired child. When he had been allowed to associate upon terms of perfect equality with that dear little girl; and enjoy for once, and once only, the privilege of association with a child still more refined, delicate, and feeling, than himself. And now, as he sat there by the fire, gazing upon the cheerful Dutchman's pipe which puffed away so cheerfully from his fire of good north-country coal, the remembrances of those days rose before him with more than common brightness, and hopes and wishes with them. An intense desire to be thought worthy to be again received upon such terms of intimacy—to be approved—to be esteemed—nay, to be admired, succeeded to the happy philosophy with which, accustomed to neglect, and hardened by indifference, he had lived to his own heart and to his two friends.

He painted to himself Lucilla smiling, beautiful, gay, and kind, still; he could feel no fear of her—but that Mr. Chandos—that elegant, quiet, reserved man, with his mild blue eye, yet his manner dashed with a something—was it *hauteur*?—what was it?—which kept him,

Gideon, at such an unapproachable distance. Then the sweet little girl!—he fancied her a mere little girl still, he thought of her just as he did of them all—as if he should find them as he had left them, and her a sweet little child still. Should he be allowed to sit by her and play at cards with her, and be her horse or her coachman—anything her little fancy dictated. How would it be?

The dressing-bell is ringing, and he must dress and appear. He lays out his clothes. In imitation of the public schools, Mr. Singletrees dignified his upper forms with the tail-coat—Gideon had but just assumed it. It was the badge of honour, yet he felt half ashamed of it. He looked in the glass at his pale young face; his figure in size rather below than above that of boys of his age; and he thought he should look so mean and insignificant in it. Sometimes he felt glad of this coat, it would give him consequence; sometimes sorry, he thought it would be impossible to play at horse in it.

Altogether he felt unusually shy and uncom-

fortable. Naturally he was not shy, for though modest and perfectly unassuming, he was quite simple, and his nerves were healthy and strong.

He would have felt more self-confidence if the glass he consulted could have reflected what no glass ever yet reflected faithfully, the true image of the countenance; could have given a just impression of the effect its expression produced upon others. If he could have seen it as it appeared to standers-by,—the fine character of that face, which to him looked so pale and small—the expression of that eye which to him was only blue—the grace and symmetry of those limbs to him so slender and insignificant, he would not, as he did, with knees slightly trembling, have run down-stairs into the hall.

Once there he paused.

Twice his hand is upon the lock of the door; twice he goes back, and again pushes back his hair, and again smoothes down his coat-sleeves—that coat to which he is yet so new.

Then he opens the door with a sort of desperate courage, and he is in the room.

They were all sitting comfortably round the

fire; and this is the way they sat. Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt side by side, and on one hand of the fire-place; and Lucilla, just as young-looking, and quite as slender and beautiful as ever, with them, talking away to her delighted father. Calantha sits in a *fauteuil* upon the opposite side of the fire, and by her—her hand in hers—a young lady; Mr. Chandos is upon the other side of her. Every body is talking, all seem happy—a happy family party it is, such as they all love—such as even Lucilla loves.

He knows and feels full well, poor fellow! that he is not really one of them; and he stops and hesitates a moment at the door, he looks upon himself as a species of intruder—he shall interrupt them.

They were so busy talking that no one perceived him at first, he had opened the door so softly—and there he stood, his colour changing, his heart beating. Poor boy! it was one of his miserable moments.

The first who turned her head was Lucilla.

She started up.

“My *protégé*, I declare! isn’t it, Calantha?—

Gideon, I protest! I should have known you among a thousand. How do you do?" shaking him cordially by the hand, "Come to the fire. I am very glad to see you again."

And taking him by the hand she led him forward.

It must be confessed these busy, good-natured people are excessively pleasant to meet with at times.

"How you are grown and improved, Gideon! But come along, let me introduce you to Mr. Chandos, and to your playfellow over again, no longer little Kitty, but Celia, as we call her now: but how *you* are grown!" she kept repeating, as she led him to the fire.

Mr. Chandos rose immediately, shook hands with him, and sat down again, and the fair girl rose up, and made him, what to his confused senses seemed the most charming of curtseys; but he was so bewildered that it was but an indistinct vision of loveliness beyond description, as he thought, that he discerned.

"That's the young lady you saved from a watery grave," said Lucilla. "Should you have known her again, Gideon?"

His head would swim, upon certain occasions, we know of old—the room, the mirrors, the pictures, the people, were all whirling round and round.

He could only make a hurried bow, and look extremely confused and awkward; he felt as if he hardly knew where he was, or what he ought to do or say.

“Well, you may sit down, however,” said Lucilla, good-naturedly, returning to her own seat, “for you look as frightened as you did the day I had you down to dessert. Do you remember how cross they all were? I wonder what they would say *now*.”

Mr. Chandos made way for him to take a chair, which stood a little out of the circle, between himself and his daughter, and he drew it forward and sat down between them.

“Have you been out to-day?” asked Calantha. She had, with almost a mother’s anxiety, sat watching all that passed, she saw the excessive and unusual hurry of spirits that he was in, and was anxious by a question to relieve him.

“No; I was busy——”

“What at? what at?” cried Lucilla. “Oh, we all know how industrious you are. I assure you the fame of your acquisitions has reached even to Elmwood Park. Even Mr. Chandos begins to expect something from you; and as for me, *I* have always thought you would make a splash in the world. Now, pray, tell us what you are engaged in at present.”

“Many things, I daresay,” said Mr. Chandos. “Gideon, it is quite true, I have heard an excellent report of you. It has given us all pleasure. Whoever knows how to labour with perseverance, knows how to live—he who has learned to subdue inclination and be industrious as a boy, will have learned to resist temptation, and become a valuable and worthy man.”

This was all very kind. Why did he feel mortified with the tone and manner with which it was said? Is he so very susceptible, so excessively proud, that he does not like even this?

Will the next sentence please him better?

“I wonder whether you remember pulling me out of the water; and how I did roar, Gideon?”

He turned and looked at her in answer to this,

but he could not articulate. He answered by a sweet, conscious, intelligent smile; and a colour, faint as the faintest blush on the faintest blush rose, just tinged her cheek, as she turned her eyes away; and then looked upon the carpet, upon which the smallest of peeping feet was engaged in pushing something that lay in the way.

A few more sentences were addressed to him by Mr. Chandos, and then he seemed to forget he was in the room, and continued his conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt.

This was all as it should be, for it would neither have been natural, right, nor proper, though we are engaged in watching the feelings, and making a sort of hero of a boy of that age, that Mr. Chandos should be.

Lucilla was, however, it seems, quite in the humour to make as much a hero of him as I am. Seeing him left out, as it were, for Kitty said no more,—or Celia, as we must learn to call her, in deference to the wishes of Mr. Chandos,—she got up, drew a chair behind him, and as he made room for her between himself and her daughter, began again:—

“What a little fellow you were—what a brave, little thing! You remember all about it; and I for one shall never forget it, nor Kitty either. We have often talked it over since, and agreed, that so courageous an action in so young a child gave promise of something far above the common in the character of the man. I am proud and pleased to see our expectations so well justified.”

Again!

He felt the—shall I call it impertinence?—the implied superiority in this open, this undisguised praise. He felt that he was not one about whom it was necessary to take the pains of being delicate—however coarsely and carelessly the incense was offered—from one like her to one like him how could it be anything but acceptable?

We must excuse her, however, a little, for it really is so difficult to know what to say to a boy of this age.

But it is still more difficult for the boy to know how to answer; and he could not just then answer. He was most rudely and stupidly silent. Calantha felt quite vexed that he did not acquit

himself better, and said, by way of saying something,—

“I am sure, Gideon is very much obliged to you, Lucilla, for expressing so good an opinion of him. Are you not, Gideon?”

“I am,” was the blunt reply.

‘Poor fellow!’ thought Lucilla, ‘this is the consequence of always depressing him and keeping him down: he has not the nerve or courage even to open his mouth when he comes into company. What a shame!—and such a fine, handsome boy as he is, too!’

So she again addressed him in the kindest, most encouraging, most patronising manner; and every word she spoke made him, in some sort, more acutely sensible of the immense distance between them.

All this time Kitty sat pushing with her foot this bit of thing upon the floor, which, if I recollect right, was a little ball of netting-silk, never once looking up, but listening to what her mother was saying; at last she lifted up her head, and said,—

“And I wonder whether you ever find time to

make walnut-shell boats for little girls in the midst of your various occupations, Gideon?"

This set him at ease. He looked at her, and said, with a smile,—

“ I never felt inclined to try but that once.”

And then she rolled the little ball of pink silk, and watched it again.

Soon after this, dinner was announced.

Mr. Mordaunt gave his arm to his daughter, Mr. Chandos attended Mrs. Mordaunt, and Gideon—

“ You take Kitty,” said Lucilla, turning back her head with a friendly smile.

“ Kitty must go alone,” said Calantha, rising slowly and painfully from her seat ; “ it is Gideon’s business to help me.”

How proud he had ever been of that privilege! —with how much happiness had he been accustomed to hurry to her side, and offer her his arm, and help her to rise from her chair; but now he felt that it was because he was not thought good enough to be allowed to give his arm to Miss Chandos that he was summoned upon this service. He was all at once growing jealous and

suspicious, imagining an injury and a hidden offence in every thing.

“And let me help too,” cried Miss Chandos, offering her tiny, little arm to support the other side of her aunt; “this was my office last time I was here, and I am not going to give it up now. A hand for each — then you will have a support in both of us.”

“Both of *us*!”

The boy’s head was turning; he trembled so that he could scarcely support Calantha at all. She perceived how nervous he was, and leaned upon Kitty, who laughed and said,—

“Oh, don’t be afraid!—I’ve a very stout little arm; but I can’t think what you do when you have Gideon alone, if he always shakes as he does now: it reminds me of the never-to-be-forgotten day of the water, when we both shivered and shook so.”

Still quite silent, he got in to dinner he never knew exactly how.

His usual place was at the bottom of the table, between Calantha and Mr. Mordaunt;—he kept it still. Lucilla sat opposite to him, upon the

other side of her father ; Mr. Chandos and his daughter upon each side of Mrs. Mordaunt, Miss Chandos being upon his own side. He could not, therefore, see her without a little turning his head, and he never once ventured to glance that way ; but he heard her sweet playful voice, and her charming little laugh,—

“ Like the sound of a summer-brook
’Mid the pleasant leaves in June.”

She, gay of heart as ever—simple and unaffected—never occupied by thoughts about herself, that consequence or cause of dull spirits—was encouraged by the presence of the father she adored, and of the grandmother who absolutely doted upon her. Unspoiled by flattery, yet encouraged by kindness ; rejoicing, as it were, in that atmosphere of love so justly her own—light of heart without being light of head, buoyant without levity of spirit, full of tender and warm affections, of kindest and most endearing habits, of lively fancy, and with a mind, through the precious cultivation it had received, alive to such varied interests—she prattled away, the delight of all who heard her.

Calantha listened, magnetised as it were by the sweet witchery, and forgot the silent boy by her side, whom no one seemed to recollect but Lucilla : she talked to him across the table, scolded him for not asking her to take wine, and made him feel, by the pointed kindness of her attentions, how much she thought he required notice because of the neglect of the others.

He would rather have been left to his somewhat sulky silence, listening to the murmurs of the summer-brook,—

“ ‘Mid the pleasant leaves in June.”

When the ladies retired after dinner, Gideon, as customary, left the room too. He did not know whether he might venture to follow into the drawing-room, or whether he was expected to go to his own chamber ; but Lucilla called after him, Calantha and Mrs. Mordaunt looked kindly, and he came in. He usually was accustomed to go to his lessons, or amuse himself in some other way, till tea-time, when he just appeared, took his cup, and went to bed. But then Mr. Mordaunt, when they were by themselves, never left his wife,

but followed his womankind into the drawing-room, and had his wine brought there; so that Calantha knew that Gideon's company would not be acceptable. Now, however, this practice was broken in upon. She would not herself have ventured upon inviting him; but as Lucilla, who could not do wrong, had done so, and as her mother smiled, she smiled too, with the sincerest pleasure.

Lucilla felt almost indignant at them both, as she observed the boy's hesitating look, and his sorrowful eyes turn towards the stairs. She never could, or never would, comprehend Calantha's difficulties: and, again, she gloried at the contrast between the generosity and liberality of her own way of thinking, and the creeping, cautious prudence of her sister. Pleased with herself, she of course was pleased with him. She asked him whether he could play at chess,—challenged him to a game, and sat down with him in one corner of the fire-place.

Celia took her netting, sat down by her mother, and watched the game, while Calantha rested upon the sofa, and Mrs. Mordaunt dozed in her chair.

He was, or appeared to be, most gravely intent—entirely absorbed with his game. He played it extremely well, only with too much appearance of caution, and checkmated Mrs. Chandos. In truth, she was but a poor player, and he might have done it without all this “fuss and hypocrisy.”

She laughed, got up from her chair, and said,—

“Oh! chess is not my forte. I am too impetuous for that sober game, but Kitty plays like an angel, if angels play. Her father has played with her, and he’s a very fine player, I believe. Kitty, sit down, and see whether you can’t revenge me, upon this very *Fabius* of a chess-player. I did not think that you were such a slow coach, Gideon.”

“I play but badly when I do not take a great deal of pains,” said he, looking up and watching Miss Chandos, who sat down opposite to him, and began to range the pieces with her lily-white hand and fingers, delicate as those of the Medicean Venus herself.

His head was full of classical allusions; he at

that moment thought of Atalanta, only to be won by those who vanquished her in speed. He did not dream of winning such a high prize; far, far, was he from that—but he *did* feel an almost foolish desire to come off victorious.

She played and talked, and smiled and played, and beat her little foot with pretty impatience while he moved and pondered — thought of other things in the midst of his moves, and then forced his attention to the game again. She made a false move and left her queen unguarded. She perceived it as he was about to capture the piece, and crying out, “ Oh! how stupid of me!” made a motion as if she would take her move back again.

He saw the action and insisted upon her doing so. She refused, and as he would not take her queen off the board did it herself. There was a little busy contentio. between them upon the subject—he endeavouring to take the queen and place it on the board, she resisting,—when the door opened, and the gentlemen entered from the dining-room.

The face of Mr. Chandos suddenly darkened;

he walked at once up to the little table, took the subject-matter of dispute out of his daughter's hand, and deciding in a somewhat authoritative manner, "that she ought to conform to the strict laws of the game," sat down to a table close by, and, taking up a book, began to read.

She looked at him with surprise painted in every feature while he did this, and with a sad sort of astonishment and bewilderment in her eyes at the tone in which he spoke—it was so new—so utterly new to her.

As he took the book she returned to her game, but she blundered, and soon lost it.

"You must let me have my revenge," she said, in a sweet, kind voice, as she looked at Gideon, and saw that his mortification at her father's abrupt manner equalled her own astonishment.

"You must give me my revenge."

"Willingly."

"No, Kitty, no more chess to-night," said Mr. Chandos, turning round, but, resuming his usual tone, said, "Go and talk to your grandmother."

Mrs. Mordaunt was sitting at the other end of the room at an opposite fire.

“ *Ce sera pour un autrefois, monsieur, à vous servir,*” said she, rising, and making a gay curtsy to Gideon, with a smile so sweet, so innocent, and so kind, that had he been trampled to the earth by the pride of others, it would have consoled him.

END OF VOL. II.

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